

# COMMENTARY

Europe's Jews: Summer, 1947

DAVID BERNSTEIN

Letter to the Movie-Makers

ELLIOT E. COHEN

The Aims of British Foreign Policy

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

The Adventures of Ilya Ehrenburg

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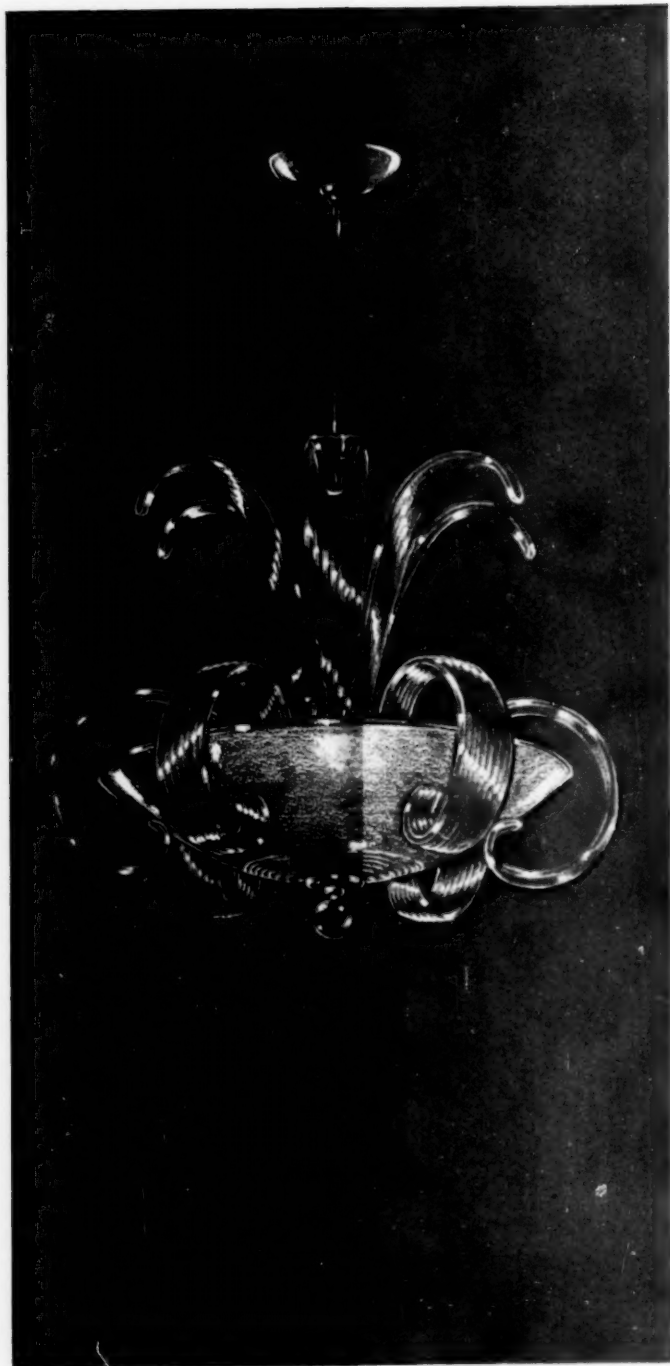
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# COMMENTARY

## EUROPE'S JEWS: SUMMER, 1947

*A Firsthand Report by an American Observer*

DAVID BERNSTEIN

**W**HEN you come back from Europe in the summer of 1947, it is not the plentiful food nor the well-stocked stores nor the undamaged cities that startle you most. After a day or two, you begin to see a more subtle, more profound difference between America and Europe:

America has already come out of the war, has almost forgotten it. Even the post-World War II mood is in back of us. But in Western Europe the last war is still going

---

DAVID BERNSTEIN has had a long and intimate acquaintance with world affairs and the European scene. He was born in Hollis, Long Island, in 1915, and educated in New York, Massachusetts, Albania, France, and Switzerland. His father was Herman Bernstein, who founded the Yiddish newspaper, the *Day*, in 1913, and who was United States Minister to Albania during the years 1930-33. Mr. Bernstein entered the Army in 1943 and saw service in the Pacific theater. There, he was the editor of a weekly magazine, *Fighting Facts*, and then, after receiving a commission in the field, was appointed special advisor to the President of the Philippines. (He has since been writing a book, *The Philippine Story*, which will be issued shortly by Farrar, Straus.) His article, "My Father's Russians," appeared in the April 1946 COMMENTARY. Mr. Bernstein recently returned from Europe after a stay of six months, where he studied European conditions for the American Jewish Committee.

on. The troops and the bombs and the physical terror are gone. There remain the shattered cities, the pervading daily dread of food and fuel shortages, the black marketeering that makes new-rich and new-poor, the instability and the uncertainty. People are still reeling, their heads a jumble of propaganda slogans from the days when it was a war of ideas, their hands nerveless for the dreary tasks of rebuilding a continent.

There is still plenty of fascism in Europe. Underneath the current conflict between Russia and the Western democracies, there is the festering threat of the Hitler ideas. An old world is gone, but nothing has yet taken its place. And the shredding of Europe's psychological fabric has left Western Europeans, at least, with little faith and less hope.

During my visit, which covered most of Western Europe in the first half of this year, I watched for the vestiges of Nazism and anti-Semitism, and found too many for comfort. I found, in Germany, a terrifying nostalgia for the good old days of Nazi splendor, a glib repudiation of all the evils of the recent past, an impelling desire for still another attempt to dominate the world. In England, I saw a nation fighting for sheer survival, yet showing the first telltale symptoms of stagnation and disease, among

them increasing anti-Semitism. All over Western Europe, among the Jews who survived the calamity, I found depression and bewilderment.

A way of life has virtually disappeared. And so far nothing has come to take its place, whether among Christians or among Jews, whether from America or from Russia. Coming out of Europe is like emerging from a system in which decent human beings revolve in senseless orbits without knowing where or why or how long.

# I

ON ONE of Prague's busiest streets there is a coffee house called the Slavia. It is considered the best in a city of good coffee houses. It spreads through the second floor of a large building, and from the street, in the late afternoon, you can see customers sitting at tables near the windows, sipping coffee and reading newspapers. The coffee is not very good these days, and the papers are thin because of the newsprint shortage, and the little cakes, which once were the delight of Europe, are synthetic and unsuccessful. But, for a crown or two, you can still be king of the coffee house, sit there all day if you like, scanning the latest papers from Prague and Paris and London, meeting your friends and talking of the difficult times, receiving your mail and your telephone calls. It is a pleasant life, if you have the time for it, and it is part of the tradition of this outpost of Western Europe.

When we were in Prague last spring, they told us the Slavia was on the verge of going out of business, along with most of the other coffee houses. Before the evil time of Munich, they explained, most of the steady patrons had been Jews with *gemuetlich* Germanic habits and easy discursive pleasures. Now they are gone, nearly all of them, and the coffee houses will follow soon.

Somehow one finds here, obliquely, a way of comprehending what the destruction of six million Jews during the war has really meant. The people are gone; and so, to a very great extent, is the way of life.

In all the lands where the Germans came,

only the strong and the lucky among the Jews survived. There are perhaps a million-and-a-half Jews left in Europe, outside of Russia, and their center of gravity has shifted very largely to the Western countries. There are at least four times as many Jews in England as in Poland, three times as many in France, and almost twice as many in the German DP camps. Except for those in England, most have been touched directly by the persecutions of our time. They are resigned, frustrated, worried, suspicious, impatient.

Instead of the clustered intellectuals in the cities which had large Jewish populations, there are now the clusters at the headquarters of the Zionist organizations, and at the American or American-supported Jewish relief agencies. One of the side effects of the war, and of the tremendous philanthropic work maintained by American Jews, has been the development of a new and absolute dependence on charity. The European communal organizations, which were once self-reliant and ruggedly independent, now quiver in fear of antagonizing the all-powerful functionaries of the JDC and other relief agencies. Even when they can help themselves, they have fallen into the habit of seeking help from the outside. This growing pauperization, which may be familiar to American social workers from the time of the great depression, has laid a heavy hand of stagnation on Jews in many parts of Europe.

In a sense, this may well be a problem far more serious than the psychological aftereffects of the Hitler persecution. Like the mother who, mercifully, cannot recall the pains of childbirth, like the combat soldier for whom the memory of fear and violence finally dims and sometimes even assumes an aura of glamor, the Jewish survivor is growing away from his past. Perhaps this is the mind's way of preserving sanity. Today the people who went through concentration camps, forced labor, death trains, and gas chambers, tell of their experiences, not as if they were reliving them, but as if they were repeating half-forgotten tales. Of

course, there are the physical reminders: the neat little serial numbers tattooed on the forearm; the deep scars on the legs of the cook at the Feldafing DP camp, who for eighteen months had been shackled to his oven to cook for S.S. troops; the ghost of a man who visited the Office of the Jewish Adviser in Frankfurt when I was there, one of the few who survived the German sterilization experiments. But for most of the Jews caught in countries through which the Nazis raged, the memory seems to be dying, and only its intangible aftereffects remain.

The worst of these, and the most damaging, is distrust—distrust of one's self, distrust of other Jews, distrust most particularly of people who are not Jews. We visited a DP camp at Furth, not far from Nuremberg. One DP pulled me aside. "You think you are sending us a lot of help from America, don't you?" he said. "Food, clothing, and other things. Well, it never gets here. The sailors steal it on the boats coming over the ocean. The workers steal it at the docks where they unload it. It is stolen from the trains. At the JDC offices they sell it on the black market. The camp committee here steal it for themselves when it gets to Furth. Tell them that in America. Tell them we are not getting any of the supplies you are sending."

"I've heard about the pilfering, and I don't doubt there is some dishonesty along the line," I said. "But tell me this: Aren't you getting more food and clothing than the Germans receive? Aren't you getting supplementary supplies right here in this camp? Where does it come from?"

He looked at me in disgust, clearly convinced that I was thick in the conspiracy, and he walked away.

## II

I FOUND another kind of distrust in Holland, among Dutch Jews who had been a part of the country for many generations. Before the war, there was virtually no anti-Semitism in the Netherlands. Nobody paid attention to Mussert, the local Nazi. It was a northern version of the Italian im-

munity to anti-Semitism. But when the Nazis came to Holland, the Jews were badly hit. There were few places to hide in this small flat country where cities are not quite big enough to lose one's self in. Family after family was rounded up and ultimately carried away. A Netherlander needed more than the usual courage to hide a Jewish friend, at a time when such daring seemed futile and quixotic. Today, Dutch Jews will tell you of some who risked their lives to save people from the Gestapo. But more often they recall neighbors who stood by wordless when the Gestapo came. They tell you of the friends who looked the other way when they passed a Jew in the street; of the business men who welched on their associates; of the acquaintances who muttered in surprise when Jews returned after the war, "Oh, so you're back . . ."; of the people of Amsterdam who, in the icy winter of 1944-45, stripped all the wood from empty homes in the Jewish section so that the supports were gone, and the houses caved in, until the neighborhood looked, as it still does, as though it had been bombed from the air.

The survivors admit that there are few vestiges of Nazi anti-Semitism in Holland today. But they feel a new, heightened Jew-consciousness which makes them uncomfortable. Unlike the Italian Jews who feel completely secure among their fellow-Italians, many Dutch Jews seem altogether distrustful of their neighbors.

They assured me that a Jew could live peacefully and pleasantly in Holland, on a par with Christians. For themselves, however, they wanted to leave. It was shocking to them that their friends no longer ranted against the Germans for their anti-Jewish atrocities, and that interest was focused instead on the war with the Indonesians which was being planned in open secrecy last winter. Why wouldn't another European war bring a repetition of their recent experience? They would not risk it again in Holland—precisely because they had once felt themselves so much a part of the country.

I remember one evening in Amsterdam, when my wife and I, with a Dutch friend, came upon an old building which is now a museum because it was the place where Catholics had made a secret church in the attic during the religious wars. One of the custodians was a scholarly young priest, who showed us the relics and displays. As we were leaving, he asked us, "Have you visited the house of Rembrandt? It is across the canal, in the Jewish quarter. You will see the buildings that have fallen down if you walk through there. The Germans took all the Jewish families away, and two winters ago some of the people of the city broke into the empty houses and took the wood away, and they have fallen down. We suffered a great loss in our Jewish population," he said almost nostalgically, "and now part of the life and flavor has gone out of our city."

It is estimated that, of approximately 30,000 Dutch Jews, at least two-thirds hope to emigrate from Holland. Most of the organizational leaders are aggressive, dogmatic Zionists. "There is nothing here for us any more," they told me, and dismissed discussion.

As it happens, a survey was made recently in Holland to find out how many people want to leave the country. More than 20 per cent of the entire Dutch population said they did—some two millions out of a total of nine million inhabitants. This widespread desire to emigrate, which is duplicated in most other European countries, is thus by no means limited to Jews. It stems from a lack of faith in the future of the country. This had been a prosperous little land before the war, drawing upon the immense wealth of its East Indian colonies and maintaining a flourishing trade with the nearby German colossus. Now the Indonesians want to break away, and the Dutch have decided to gamble lives and money in a last desperate effort to retain their empire in the old-fashioned way. As for Germany, the Dutch realize that a revived German economy would mean prosperity for Holland, but

that it would also mean a renewed threat of aggression. And so they want to leave. It is natural that Jews should feel doubly insecure.

On the other hand, it is hardly likely that two million Netherlands will find it feasible to emigrate within the near future. Through the years, the pressure to get out may build up tremendously if economic conditions do not improve; or it may die down, if the country reestablishes itself firmly within a revived European economy. And speaking realistically, few of the 20,000 Dutch Jews are likely to get to Palestine soon, or to other countries. Yet many refuse to think in terms of the relatively easy steps required to reintegrate themselves into the Dutch community. The war forced them into a dream world of their own, and they have not yet dared emerge to face realities.

Obviously the Jews in Europe have been—and probably still are—by a good deal the least safe of all groups. It is also true that there are some areas in Europe where no reasonably sane Jew would freely choose to settle for good. On the other hand, the only such areas in Western Europe are Germany and perhaps Austria. In other countries their desire for escape stems at least as much from the continent-wide *malaise* as from fear of the past and the future.

For instance, in the case of Holland again, there is the matter of the ten thousand or more Jews who have indicated no intention of emigrating. Many of these actually do seek escape, but in a way different from the Zionists. Their flight is from the fact of having been born Jewish. They are often extreme assimilationists, some converting to other faiths, and others seeking merely to repudiate their Jewishness, or to ignore it.

In the middle, however, perhaps in relatively small numbers, one does find people who consider themselves Dutch subjects of the Jewish faith. All of these, the submerged third, tend to be ignored by Jewish observers. They are not vocal. Indeed, they deliberately refrain from being so. Theirs is a problem which demands im-



mediate attention, shared as it is by hundreds of thousands of Jews in Western Europe who do not wish to leave, or who cannot do so for a long time because of international obstacles. The task is to help them to reintegrate, to reestablish themselves in an all too flimsy continental social and economic structure.

To date, we have given all too little thought to this problem.

### III

WHEN you go from Frankfort to Berlin, your train travels for many hours through the Russian Zone. Coming and going, the train, for some reason, always stops at a small town called Genthin, in the forbidden territory. Each time my train stopped at Genthin, thirty or forty children were waiting for us. They stood on the small, sharp stones beside the roadbed as the cars slowed down. Blond and blue-eyed, most of them, ragged and barefoot, they looked like a rachitic brigade of Hitler's hopefuls. They made up a sort of children's breadline, waiting for the American passengers to throw candy out to them.

On my last trip from Berlin, we stopped at Genthin an especially long time. But, unlike the first stop, no one threw out the candy bars at once. For at least half an hour the children waited quietly, with a patient alertness. At last a passenger tossed a bar of chocolate to one boy, who caught it skillfully and walked a few feet back of the others. He put the candy untouched inside his shirt. Two or three other boys, all bigger than the lucky one, came over to see what he had gotten. He pulled the candy out of his shirt and showed it. They did not try to take it away from him; perhaps they had learned that this might kill the sympathy of the watching Americans. Instead, they went back to their trainside vigil, while the boy with the candy stood there, alone, holding the treasure under his shirt, and on his face an unconscious, unbroken smile.

The other children waited, unsmiling, except for one little girl who could not have

been more than four years old and who was shyly flirting with a passenger in a subtle, sensitive and utterly disarming way. Still the shower of candy did not come. The time dragged inconsiderately, as though the camera of a European motion picture classic had rested on these children for that little extra moment beyond the expected in order to tear one's heart. Finally, very slowly, the train began to move. The children moved down the tracks, keeping abreast of the passengers. Suddenly, someone threw out a shower of caramels. After that, candy rained from the train—chocolate, chewing gum, and all the cherished produce of the PX, caught on the fly by children leaping, swerving, tripping, running, keeping up with the train as it gathered speed, their skinny legs moving faster, their bare feet beating across the sharp stones. At last they were out of sight.

It was a trivial incident in the life of a conquered nation. Yet it was a frightening thing. For, in itself, it represented the paradox of present-day Germany.

The paradox is this: that, for Americans especially, the individual German is an attractive person. These children were charming little people; they were pathetic in their need for sweets, yet they did not whine or pester; they stood there quietly, with trust in their eyes. And the American heart went out to them.

As for the adults, they strike most Americans in Germany as decent, pleasant, rather kindly people, who respect their parents, love children, and lavish affection on pets; they are admirably clean and orderly, and have all the solid qualities favored by Ben Franklin.

For most Americans, it is increasingly difficult to associate such individuals with the crimes and bestiality of Germans as a group. This is the paradox of the individual German vs. the collective German. A child, a pretty girl, a wise old lady, is friendly to him, and the American cannot remember what he has been told about the German record. The contrast is too great to be believed.

AND yet the contrast is there. An official survey of a cross-section of the eighteen million Germans in the American Zone, made last winter, revealed that 61 per cent of the Germans are deeply imbued with anti-Semitism. Only 2 per cent of the Germans can be described as positively opposing race hatred. This was the third such survey in the American Zone since the occupation began. Each time the figures were worse. This increased expression of anti-Jewish attitudes reveals, not an increased anti-Semitism, but a greater willingness to tell the truth when questions are asked—in other words, a greater amount of German self-confidence. Meanwhile, other surveys have shown that the majority of Germans feel that National Socialism was a good idea badly carried out, which simply means they are sorry Germany lost the war. Most Germans are also militaristic, and contemptuous of democratic ideas and practices. They refuse, by and large, to accept any responsibility for Nazi atrocities against Jews or anyone else, and many even doubt that such atrocities really occurred.

The American program of democratic re-education has, on the record, failed completely (and I suspect surveys in the other three Zones would expose equal failures). Perhaps the program could not possibly have succeeded in two years, and perhaps—with our democratic refusal to use Nazi propaganda methods—it cannot succeed for generations. But the American occupation is not likely to last for generations. We are in Germany today not because of the Germans, but because of the Russians. If our fear of the Russian menace were to subside, we would probably be out of Germany in six months—whether or not the Germans were still Nazis. The basic American policy today is to turn over to the Germans as much responsibility as possible as rapidly as possible. Already many of the normal functions of government have been turned back, and every day more power is restored. A German policeman now has the authority to arrest an American soldier for cause in conquered Germany. The policy of restoring

power to Germans is all the more dangerous because it is a natural tendency of the military mind to favor arch-conservatives—who, after de-Nazification, are the closest to National Socialism by inclination and philosophy.

Nor is the alternative as easy as it may seem to liberals in the United States. We looked for German democrats in the American Zone, and we found some—but they had to be pointed out to us by people who had been around for a long time. They are very few, and some of them are not real democrats. We talked, for example, to several of the top leaders of the Social Democratic party. We found a reflection of the extreme nationalism preached by Herr Schumacher in the British Zone. We found a disinclination to worry about such minor matters as intense anti-Semitism, and an unwillingness to assume that Germans who voted for Social Democratic candidates might need some further education in democracy. We even found, among Social Democratic leaders, a tendency to explain away German anti-Semitism as natural and in some ways justified. On the other hand, we talked to writers and professors (intellectuals all) who were brilliant, courageous, anti-Nazi and truly democratic—but quite helpless. On the one hand, they receive little support from the Americans; on the other, if they did receive such support they would be accused of "collaboration" by other Germans.

IT is a frightening experience to visit Germany with your eyes and ears open. You come away with the conviction that the Germans are, in the overwhelming majority, members of an unspoken understanding to take advantage of the East-West split; to bide their time and seize on each opportunity to make further headway; to rebuild their country's economy, if possible with naive American help; and then, when the chance comes, to make another attempt to dominate the world, avoiding the mistakes which resulted in failure last time.

It is argued by both Germans and Ameri-



cans that hungry people cannot be good democrats; that they are naturally inclined to look back yearningly to the good days under Hitler; that they are inevitably bitter against the conquerors. True, most Germans are near starvation now. But German farmers—in Bavaria, for example—are better off than they have ever been. They have enough to eat. Their homes are usually intact. They have many luxuries, for they are the kings of the black market. Yet the surveys reveal that these people are, if anything, even more Nazi-minded than the hungry Germans in the cities.

If only by their instinct for self-preservation, the Jewish DP's in Germany are very much aware of what is happening. They have no scientific surveys, no detailed intelligence reports, not even a dependable press; but they do have the recollection of the past, and an awareness of the present, which suffice to reassure them that the only sensible objective is to get out of Germany as quickly as possible. Occasionally, there have been incidents between them and Germans—and even between DP's and American GI's egged on by German girls. Through a DP grapevine news of these incidents travels fast, usually exaggerated in the telling, both because of the unnatural atmosphere of the camps and because of a deliberate policy on the part of Jewish political extremists who delight in proving that Jews can trust no one but themselves.

The camps themselves are uncomfortable places. Physically, the basic needs of DP's are being met—there is at least the minimum level of food and clothing and shelter. A few camps are not especially well cared for, but many are models of cleanliness and sanitation, considering the circumstances. But the most striking contrast between Jewish DP camps and those of Poles and Balts is in the atmosphere of impermanence in the Jewish camps. Here you see no neat little gardens, no green lawns and flowers, no attempts at community decorations and small luxuries to make life easier. In the center of each Jewish camp, there is only the stark little memorial to the six millions

who died, and nothing else. Partly, this is because the Jewish DP's are mostly from the cities, and have never had the pleasant habit of tending a piece of land of their own. But the real reason lies elsewhere: in the burning desire to get out, and to shut out any implication that they may have to remain where they are for any serious length of time.

#### IV

IT is a long way, in more than miles, from Germany to England. The British have a system of political democracy which, in spite of such archaic curiosities as the monarchy and the House of Lords and the quaint costumed ceremonials, is more efficient and realistic than our own. They have embarked on an experiment in social democracy, under the Labor Government, far more courageous than any we have known. Only in what might be called personal democracy—the attitude of the average man toward himself and his place in the scheme of things—do we really surpass the British.

The British are a stable people, addicted to tradition, and yet with a genuine human yearning for fair play. It would be hard to think of any other group of forty million human beings going through what the British went through last winter—with the intense cold, the fuel crisis, the monotonous food, the knowledge that all sorts of good things were being manufactured in Britain only to be shipped abroad for precious dollars, the fear of being reduced in the eyes of the world to a third-rate power—and coming out with so much good humor and self-assurance.

At the same time there are cracks in the foundation. Most British Jews to whom I talked in London were convinced that anti-Semitism was rising. They generally attributed this to the after-effects of Nazi propaganda since 1933, and to the Palestine crisis. No surveys have been made of British attitudes on anti-Semitism, but the little unscientific signs are there—the remarks in public places, the hesitancy of public figures to take a forthright stand on issues involving

Jews, the hints in some of the newspapers.

Undoubtedly, Nazi propaganda has left its mark on Britain. Germany was very near home, and Dr. Goebbels' people could be heard clearly. Before the war there were many prominent Britons, associated with the Cliveden Set and "The Link," who were so bent on reaching an understanding with Germany that they tended to overlook or even condone the anti-Jewish outrages. So, among some Britons, anti-Semitism achieved some respectability.

The impact of the Palestine situation is more immediate. Whatever other people may think about the propriety of Britain's presence in Palestine, the fact is that terrorist activity has resulted in the death of British soldiers as well as of civilians totally unconnected with political issues. Inevitably, the British public tends to become angry against Jews in Britain, whom it associates with the terrorists. Since the majority of British Jews are Zionists, this is not too difficult a transfer for other Britons to make. And it was probably true that a good many British Jews did have, for a time, some appreciation of the motives of the terrorists. (In more recent months, however, I have the impression that the attitude of British Jews has itself changed, and that there is a good deal of outright resentment against the brutality and stupidity of terrorist tactics.)

At the same time, we know it is not unusual, in British history, for troubles in the Empire to have repercussions at home. The British are rather used to that. And, quite possibly, they will forget their resentment after the crisis in Palestine is settled one way or another, as some day it must.

**B**UT there are at least two further causes for the present British attitude. One of them is the very pattern of Jewish life in England. Despite the crosscurrents of political controversy, the organizational structure to which British Jews are committed is far more centralized than the one we have in America. The Board of Deputies represents most, though not all, Jewish socie-

ties and congregations. It has a certain official status in its relationship to the Government. There is the institution of the Chief Rabbi. There is, on the whole, a more solid Jewish community consciousness than could possibly exist in the United States in any field outside of philanthropy; as a group they seem to have a greater feeling of apartness. Remember, the Readings and the Montefiores and the other familiar old names are few in number. Actually the large majority of Jews in Britain are relative newcomers. They are still first- and second-generation, and they consider themselves outsiders. With the second generation, they may have lost their Jewish accents; and because England is a more stable country than the United States, the process of Jewish integration into the community may not have the rough edges which are familiar to us at home. However, because England is more homogeneous, the process is a good deal slower than in America.

I was in London when the scrolls at the Dollis Hill Synagogue were burned. The incident took place right after a British war hero had been flogged by terrorists in Palestine. Vandals entered the London synagogue, burned the scrolls, and scrawled on the wall: "You flog, we burn." A very agitated British Jew told me the next day, "Well, after all, we asked for it." No group to which this man belonged could, by any stretch of imagination, be considered remotely responsible for what the Irgun did in Palestine. Yet he accepted a group responsibility inconceivable, I think, to most American Jews, and certainly not supported by facts. It is a sign of apartness, and it may have a subtle bearing on the present British attitude toward Jews.

Less subtle, surely, is the effect of economic conditions in Britain today. Life is not very pleasant there, what with coal shortages, electricity cuts, monotonous food, queues, ration books, and restrictions on luxuries, from tobacco to foreign travel. In a time of trouble, people look for scapegoats. During the war, they had Hitler. Now the war is over, and in some ways con-

ditions are even worse; and the Jews furnish an easy scapegoat.

Indeed, the surprising thing is not that there is some anti-Semitism in England, but that there is so little. In overt forms, it is very slight: a few street-speakers, a few vandals, a few organizations. The newspapers have shown a very great moderation in reporting events that could easily have lent themselves to either subtle or obvious incitement to hatred. The discriminations, in their more obvious forms, are very few. And the basic common sense of the British public has not been seriously breached.

### V

EUROPE is in chaos, still not finished with World War II. It is floundering and thrashing about in efforts to save itself. The British, in their own way, are trying to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. The Czechs, with an even greater dose of socialism, but with a real devotion to democracy, are trying to do the same, burdened by the added handicap of Russia's proximity. The Swedes have enjoyed luxurious prosperity up to now, but even they are beginning to realize that no nation can isolate itself from the world's troubles for long; and now they are worried about impending inflation and fuel shortages this winter. The Belgians, too, have achieved a measure of economic stability, but no one is sure that it will last. The French are struggling through a complex, disorganized period of political and economic jitters. The Italians are even worse off.

As far as the Jewish prospect is concerned, these things at least seem to be clear, out of the chaos:

First: Apart from Germany and Austria,

there is no country west of the line of Russian domination in which anti-Semitism has reached alarming proportions—or where it is a major political factor. There are many reasons for this. One is that the traditional concept of democracy and liberty is still strong. Another is that too many people still associate anti-Semitism with the hated Nazis. Still another is that the war itself destroyed the myth that Jews are a powerful and sinister group manipulating world affairs to their own nefarious ends.

Second: Germany, the very pivot of Europe, is still poisoned by Nazism. Seventy million intelligent, industrious, disciplined human beings might still mould themselves into a powerful machine to achieve ambitions which make sense to them. These ambitions are still a threat, not merely to a few million Jews, but to the whole world. So far, despite the Allied victory, there is no real and lasting assurance that the Germans have sloughed off the mentality and the aspirations that could some day start a new world war.

Third: Whether or not there is a settlement in Palestine to the satisfaction of the Zionists, whether or not the Stratton Bill is passed by the next Congress, a very large number of Jews are going to remain in Western Europe for good. Their physical safety as Jews, and their economic security as Europeans, will depend upon the physical safety and economic security of Europe as a whole. Only by the reorganization of Europe out of chaos, along the lines of political democracy and economic progress, can they and all their fellow-Europeans hope for survival and happiness. As Jews, we have a special interest in furthering such reorganization.

## LETTER TO THE MOVIE-MAKERS

### *The Film Drama as a Social Force*

ELLIOT E. COHEN

GENTLEMEN:

We see by the papers that Hollywood is to give us a cycle of movies on anti-Semitism. This is exciting news. At last we are to have the fabulous magic of the film, the influence of its stars on the millions, its infinite technical resources, marshalled against this insidious social threat.

*Crossfire*, the first serious film on the subject, with an outspoken message attacking anti-Semitism, has now appeared, and we are to have *Gentleman's Agreement*, *Focus*, a still-untitled film built around a Gerald L. K. Smith type of demagogue, and probably others.

We have seen *Crossfire*. The film is palpably sincere; its producer is to our knowledge both earnest and intelligent. Yet the film raises certain serious questions which prompt this letter.

It is proverbially ungracious to look a gift horse in the mouth. We hope that you will not be too impatient if serious people do just that. Please don't resent it—you've offered him as an entry in one of the most

A BOYHOOD as one of a Jewish storekeeping family in the Negro district of an Alabama town and some four decades of interest in Jewish life may account, in part, for the concern of the writer of this letter with the problem of prejudice. A writer and critic, ELLIOT E. COHEN has also been professionally engaged in public relations work, and he has a record of active participation in organized effort for the defense of civil liberties and the rights of minorities. He has had some firsthand experience with movie-makers and movie-making, and is a constant moviegoer. He was born in 1899, and is a graduate of Yale. He is editor of COMMENTARY. The views he expresses here, it should perhaps be mentioned, are his own, and do not necessarily coincide with the views of the American Jewish Committee, which sponsors this magazine.

serious races in history—the race of man's intelligence against that most subtle and perhaps most explosive of modern man's insanities—Jew-hatred.

LET'S take a serious look at *Crossfire*, offered by the producer as a path-breaking opening gun in Hollywood's crusade against this prejudice.

If a film is to reach the millions, it must be made attractive to the millions; therefore *Crossfire* is a murder melodrama, in which the master detective solves the crime. In the shadowy living room of a modern apartment we see a man beaten to death by one of two unrecognizable figures, both of whom flee. The dead man is Samuels, a Jew (Sam Levene). Earlier that evening, at a cocktail bar, he had become involved in conversation with a group of demobilized soldiers, and ended by inviting one of them, a depressed sensitive youngster (Mitch), to his apartment to hear some records. The detective (Captain Finlay: Robert Young) must find the murderer among the four soldiers. The first suspect is obviously Mitch, whose wallet is found, but suspicion finally centers on another of the four, Corporal Montgomery (Robert Ryan). Montgomery admits following Mitch to Samuels' apartment with Bowers, a buddy; we are shown a flashback of a drinking scene in which Montgomery insults Samuels as a slacker, a niggardly host, and with other insinuations just short of open Jew-baiting. The rest of the picture revolves around efforts to find and clear Mitch, and to expose Montgomery as the murderer. In this Finlay is aided by Sergeant Keeley (Robert Mitchum), who is a friend of Mitch. It is a crime that obviously has no rational motive, Captain Finlay tells Keeley, and Jew-hatred, as revealed by Mont-



gomery's recurrent anti-Semitic remarks, qualifies as the purely irrational missing factor.

When suspicion closes in on Montgomery, he kills his friend Bowers, the only eyewitness. But another friend, Leroy, a Tennessean who has been the butt of Montgomery's bullying, is persuaded to cooperate in a ruse by which Montgomery is made to expose himself. (Leroy consents to trap Montgomery because he resents him, and because a five-minute speech by the detective convinces him of the menace of race-hatred. Hatred is an irrational force, says Finlay: that hatred which once fastened itself on Irish-Catholic immigrants now attaches itself to Jews, and might in the end even attack all "men with striped ties"; his own grandfather, an Irish-Catholic coal-miner, was beaten to death because he had come to the defense of the town priest.)

Trapped, Montgomery breaks from the room and runs up and down the street, cornered by police cars but refusing to surrender, until he is killed from the upstairs window by a shot from Captain Finlay's revolver.

**W**HAT could be better? Five or six times during a typical movie feature, which will be seen by millions of average Americans, the hitherto unmentionable subject of anti-Semitism is exposed to the light of day, condemned, and its menace explained by Robert Young and Robert Mitchum, two of America's best liked and respected movie personalities, speaking as Gentiles—Catholic and Protestant respectively; moreover, warning of anti-Semitism as a danger to Gentiles (and America as a whole) and not as a threat against Jews alone. And for those who miss the argument, there is the stark syllogism of the drama's action: An anti-Semite kills a Jew; he is killed by the law. A capital punishment for a capital crime—simple, swift, and unmistakable.

And so, understandably, many general and Jewish "defense" organizations, film critics, propagandists, advertising men, and plain citizens are enthusiastic. The pro-

ducer is commended as a pioneer in public education: if other film producers will only go and do likewise, at last we shall be making progress.

As an advertising expert says: "It is an axiom that the three laws of advertising are 1. repetition 2. repetition 3. repetition"; and if an endless repetition of the formula LSMFT has the whole world buying Lucky Strikes, may we not, by similarly pounding away on the wrongness of hating Jews, wear a new groove in the reflexes of American social behavior?

**A**ND yet, gentlemen—one is not happy to report it—there are others, equally concerned with the problem and equally expert, who see the picture differently.

The picture has been seen by psychiatrists, psychologists, sociologists, and others with substantial experience in research and action programs in the field of anti-Semitism and allied problems; and this writer has had the benefit of the views of a number of them.

Of these, many were favorably impressed by the movie as a movie. But even most of these were by no means confident of its power to reshape the attitudes (and behavior) of its audiences. A few thought that the picture would "do good everywhere"; it would definitely influence the public, or, at least, as one mental hygienist put it, "bringing prejudice to the surface and openly confronting it is healthier than continuing to leave it suppressed and hidden." But others saw a more complex effect: the already liberal would be pleased—they would have their beliefs confirmed; the more thoughtful and only slightly anti-Semitic might be pushed over the line into the liberal camp. But, they speculated, would the unthoughtful, average movie-goer, with his hodgepodge of accumulated conditionings about Jews—the Christ-killer stigma, the "alien" taint, the various social "exclusions," the cluster of traditional stereotypes (usurer, radical, parasite, wizard, etc.)—would *he* be influenced? And the *real* anti-Semite, the personality alerted to the "Jew-menace" in a serious way—was it likely that the film could hope

to persuade this crucial group of its error?

Some of the experts were definitely negative, and saw the picture as not merely not helpful, but potentially harmful, especially as respects the strongly anti-Semitic moviegoer. Trying to look at the film through his eyes, as they have learned to know him through their studies of his personality type and its motivations, these less sanguine individuals saw *Crossfire* this way:

*Crossfire* is no cops-and-robbers story: from the start it projects you into the involved and unhealthy atmosphere of the "hardboiled" detective thriller (Hammett-Chandler: Bogart-Alan Ladd), in which violence and intrigue have acquired a new, sadistic dimension. It is a milieu in which the characters are mostly not merely sinister, but depraved: fists crunch against skulls, and murder is only the final expression of a world of hostility, torture, betrayal, and cruelty. Vice is no longer a mere means of advancing the plot (for the characters: for the audience) but an end in itself. Perversities lie close to the surface. And as this film progresses, it is clear that because of the social framework in which it is cast, and because it consciously and recurrently touches real social issues (a half-dozen others besides anti-Semitism) it is bound to set reverberating group and class prejudices and loyalties not evoked by the ordinary crime film or Western. (*Crossfire*, says one observer, starts a hundred hares, emotionally speaking, though in the end it may snare none.)

Now, let us watch the film as it might unfold before that more consciously anti-Semitic section of the audience which we are particularly disturbed about—and especially that crucial group, the "unadjusted" veterans. They see a group of GI's—just demobilized, ordinary, white native Protestant, "our kind,"—a band of comrades with battle records, plagued by the unhappinesses and insecurities of that new, troubling No Man's Land between war and postwar. Time hangs on their hands. We see them playing cards, griping (Montgomery), drinking, unhappy about their wives (Mitch).

A stranger butts in at the bar—a soft, suave, prosperous-looking businessman-artist-Jew, and reads Mitch a soulful sermon explaining why the world is so upset: it's natural, everybody's emotions were focussed on one object (illustration: this peanut I hold in my hand); now the war is over (illustration: he pops the peanut into his mouth)—so, naturally, our emotions are on the loose. Now because there is no enemy left to hate, a man begins to hate himself.

A wise guy—knows all the answers. This Jew has a fast-looking babe with him (obviously Gentile). He makes up to Mitch and invites him to his room—what does he want of him? Two of the others follow—free liquor, why not? Montgomery is pretty lit, and works himself into a drunken, chip-on-his-shoulder argument with the Jew.

Now, Montgomery. A tough character, and a nasty streak in him, especially with a drink or two under his belt. But you're drawn to him. He's big, he catches your eye. His personality overshadows the others. A plain, husky fellow, not much education, visibly troubled, up against a world too smart for him, fighting shrewdly, stupidly, blindly against the "others" who hem him in—before his crime, after his crime. (For the millions near enough like him to identify with him, will Montgomery be the simple bully and villain the producer intended, assuming that was his intention? The chances are just as good that he will be taken as a kind of hero-victim—the movie equivalent of the Hemingway-Faulkner-Farrell male, hounded and struck down by a world he never made.)

So he gets drunk, and he roughs up this Jew-civilian, and kills him.

And then we see this slick detective (Robert Young, note: the high-society playboy of a score of romantic films) closing in on Montgomery.

Mitch, the first suspect, is in the meantime piddling around with imagined marital troubles pretty completely on a women's magazine level, a mild, moony kind of a softie, hardly a man, much less a murderer. And then there is Sergeant Keeley, smooth,



given to cynical moralizing, ambiguous for a soldier, who puts in with the law.

It is he and the police captain—plus a brought-in major—who get this other soldier, a weak, illiterate hillbilly who doesn't know what time it is, to break every tie of soldier loyalty—that bond of common sufferings, discriminations, heroisms real or imagined—not merely to give his friend up, like a stool pigeon, but to trap him to his doom like a Judas! And so they corner Montgomery in the street—and they don't give him a trial, they don't even give him a chance to tell his story—they let him run up and down like a rat, and shoot him like a rat.

What the hell kind of justice is that, a soldier, who fought for his country, just for roughing up some smart-aleck Jew, and when the soldier was blind drunk and on a tear? What kind of a country do you call this when. . . . It only goes to show. . . .

Can you be sure that the anti-Semites in the audience won't react this way?

ONE thing is sure: this film sets up no simple equation with one inevitable answer, but a complex set of equations with a number of possible conclusions. Some are obviously minus. It is a credit to the producer that he complicates his fable, you say—it's evidence of sincerity and intelligence. If Montgomery were a simple villain, he would be incredible, would not evoke sympathy or identification. But you make him human enough to catch the emotions, and you never let him explain himself or the hold of the anti-Semitic insanity on him. This man so obviously torn by inner turmoil—we know little of his past (and that irrelevant); and his mouth is stopped by a bullet (his story untold).

And the Jew—to your credit he is no pasteboard, Arrow-collar noble-innocent. But in the few minutes we see him he establishes himself complexly and ambiguously. As a matter of fact (if it was done intentionally, here is an audacious producer indeed!) he is, come alive, a composite of many of the anti-Semitic stereotypes of the Jew—soft-handed, flashily dressed, suave,

artistic, intellectual, moralizing, comfortably berthed in a cushy bachelor apartment during a war, with a bosomy Gentile mistress, self-assured, pushing in where he is not wanted. The audience never learns anything about him, either—except when his certificate of honorable discharge (he was no civilian, but wounded in Okinawa; and he is not really rich, we are *told*) is dragged in to help establish the propaganda point.

Anti-Semitism, and only in its most extreme form, is dramatically *exhibited*; it causes simply and implausibly *preached*: Anti-Semitism is a pure irrational hate floating in space, embodied whimsically in certain individuals, directed whimsically against certain targets—Irish-Catholics; Jews; possibly, next, folks from Tennessee; after that, why not "men with striped ties"? This is the picture's sociological wisdom about anti-Semitism.

A complex social situation is set up—demobilized soldiers, each frustrated and rebellious in some different, individual way, a muddled postwar world; and, then, the simple cowboy-and-Indian resolution—these "buddies" unite as a posse in the out-of-hand execution of one of their number by the sheriff.

Research has established that propaganda may have "boomerang" effects. It is such considerations as the above that lead some experts to argue that there is a chance that *Crossfire* may reinforce rather than abate the emotions that make for anti-Semitism—and in a most ticklish sector of the population.

One doesn't yell "Fire" in a crowded movie house, even if there is a fire. On the surface, it wouldn't seem to make sense to show a film in a lynch county in Mississippi exhibiting in all its gruesome horror the burning of a Negro, presented momentarily and as a stock figure and about whom we are told nothing as a person, interspersed with a few moral preachments against Negro hatred by a northern college-bred FBI operative, followed up by his pistoling of the local taxi-driver who headed the mob. Don't you risk something when you voice before millions the

old European cry (to our knowledge still unheard on these shores) "Kill the Jew!"—and show the scapegoat actually slaughtered?

One West Coast psychologist, with an extensive record of study of the inner mechanisms of race hatred, raises the question whether a series of films like *Crossfire* might not link up hidden emotions with open action (heretofore aborted in our society) and stimulate violence—especially if the Jew continues to be presented as the helpless, non-resistant, made-to-order victim.

It is fair to say that, to our knowledge, this expert's fear of such consequences seems to be shared by few. If one were to sum up available expert opinion, few anticipate any great damage—and just as few see any important constructive social good. Mostly, they say, "It may do some good" or "It may have no effect either way." Or, say a few, "It may do some harm," or, "It may do some good in some areas and some harm in others." And there is a third view: If experts see such different versions of the same film, with such different impacts, isn't the over-all audience effect likely to add to the irritation, the frustration, and the sense of inner conflict that for so many Americans surround (and feed) anti-Semitism?

If clarity cures, the sheer confusion set up by *Crossfire* may, at the least, complicate the cure.

**B**UT there is one thing upon which all experts agree. In all humility, they say, "Actually, we don't know what effect a dramatic film like *Crossfire* will have on group prejudice." They would claim to have some understanding of the causes of anti-Semitism, economically, socially, culturally, psychologically; somewhat less understanding of the effect of simple propaganda methods on mind and behavior; but on the host of problems raised by a dramatic film like *Crossfire*—there, on their own admission, they sail uncharted seas.

Anti-Semitism, gentlemen, is a tricky disease. At the moment, we know that the germs of this disease lie latent everywhere in this country, stimulating large masses to

relatively discreet discriminations and exclusions, stimulating others to more or less open hatred and scarce-hidden violence and aggressions. (Pre-war Germany seemed less infected.) But suddenly—and this is the great fear—the disease can flare epidemically—and tens of thousands cry "Kill the Jew"—while the other millions stand passively by. Six million Jews—not to speak of most of Europe itself—died of such an epidemic not so long ago.

It does you credit that you wish to help in the hunt for preventive serums and cures. But, gentlemen, if it were cancer, and, after years of research, the doctors were still puzzled, would you . . . out of sheer boy-scout good-will . . . flood the drug-stores with a medicinal concoction thrown hastily together by a few of the boys in the back room?

Anti-Semitism, we repeat, is a serious problem, and *Crossfire* raises serious questions about it. But, to paraphrase an old Jewish joke, if you raise a serious question, your audience is entitled to a serious answer.

**I**F WE are being serious—and, remember, we still have this whole cycle of serious films on anti-Semitism ahead of us—might it not be a good thing, before we go further, to have a sober look at some of the things we know about changing real human attitudes—and behavior—by propaganda?

In the first place, changing a man's prejudices is a different matter from making him buy a certain brand of cigarette. Researches provide some evidence that a simple, reiterated good-will message, even if inserted like a "commercial" in the midst of mass entertainment, won't do it. In addition, there is the fact that even LSMFT and Jack Benny must have in addition to the endless repetition of Sunday after Sunday, an attendant barrage of newspaper ads, radio spot announcements, billboards and the rest—it must have that "saturation" without which every advertising man tells us it is hopeless to expect to influence mass buying. If you need the endless barrage to set people to switching from Old Golds to Lucky Strikes, to substitute two simple words for two equally simple

words, where are you with the good-will messages of Captain Finlay?

Early counter-propaganda against anti-Semitism assumed that on the clean slate of the individual's mind someone had written a misstatement, or drawn a simple false picture (stereotype). "Jews dodge war service"; so merely substitute the statement "10 per cent more Jews served our country in World War II than any comparable group." They say Jews are black marketeers. Just cut in with a picture of the heroic Barney Ross.

But, alas, it is more difficult than that. It is not merely that anti-Semitism is an infinitely complex set of "facts," images, emotions, conditionings, reflexes, beliefs, behavior patterns—subtle, shifting, mutually contradictory—accumulated over a lifetime; and that so much of it lies, like an iceberg, hidden, unconscious, inarticulate, expressing itself only in distorted forms, out of the reach, not merely of the outsider, but of the individual himself.

Even more important is the fact that the Jew-hatred of the dangerous anti-Semite is not a casual bit of excess baggage, to be casually discarded. It is central to his personality. It is perhaps his most important defense in a harsh world, enabling him to operate in the midst of conflicting pressures and personal frustrations. To greater or less degree it protects him; and, needing it, he will *fight* to protect it.

The easy-going journalistic assumption that a mere *exposé* suffices to cure a social ill is naive or worse. As for advertising wisdom, what could LSMFT do, if it were a question, not of riding and channelizing cigarette buying, but of stopping the cigarette habit? We are beginning to understand the personality frustrations at the root of chronic alcoholism; how many *Lost Weekends* would it take to make a dent in the consumption of alcohol on, say, the Hollywood lots?

A second fact. The capacity of the infected personality to *evade* the impact of propaganda is amazing. A research institute interviewed individuals on their reactions to a series of cartoons caricaturing the bigot, in

broad tabloid style. Perhaps we need not be surprised that many people simply failed to understand the cartoons at all. But an astonishing number of those who understood the message simply evaded, in any one of a multitude of ways, making any connection between the message and its application to themselves.

The murderer in *Crossfire* is given a paper on which an address is written; obsessed by fear of capture he misreads it into the address of the house in which he killed his buddy. Write as plainly as you will the address of the social ills that plague the anti-Semite, and see him return unerringly to the scene of his ancient crime—the Jewish image he slays daily.

**T**HIRD, there is some indication that there is among Americans a growing negative reaction to propaganda—the "special interest" message in the sugar pill. Two wars and the ministrations of radio announcers have set up at least the beginnings of a definite consumers' resistance, especially in the field of ideas; people seem increasingly sophisticated as to sources, sceptical as to motives. (Paul F. Lazarsfeld's study of a recent Presidential campaign draws the conclusion that the whole concerted barrage of campaign propaganda played an insignificant role in changing the votes of those who had already made up their minds.) The Superman tolerance programs have evoked wide commendation among men of good will. But I know at least one 12-year-old Jewish boy, very much interested in prejudice, who doesn't think much of them. "Oh, they just do it because they get a lot of publicity; they expect people to say how wonderful they are; my friend Jimmy says, 'Who's paying for it?'" (Jimmy is Gentile.)

Fourth—and here, perhaps, we enter the realm of speculation. If we intend to place weight on the dramatic film for anti-prejudice messages, perhaps we should look a little more closely at the whole great American institution of "going-to-the-movies." The film, yes, but in its context—the mass attendance of our population, weekly, almost

old European cry (to our knowledge still unheard on these shores) "Kill the Jew!"—and show the scapegoat actually slaughtered?

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words, where are you with the good-will messages of Captain Finlay?

Early counter-propaganda against anti-Semitism assumed that on the clean slate of the individual's mind someone had written a misstatement, or drawn a simple false picture (stereotype). "Jews dodge war service"; so merely substitute the statement "10 per cent more Jews served our country in World War II than any comparable group." They say Jews are black marketeers. Just cut in with a picture of the heroic Barney Ross.

But, alas, it is more difficult than that. It is not merely that anti-Semitism is an infinitely complex set of "facts," images, emotions, conditionings, reflexes, beliefs, behavior patterns—subtle, shifting, mutually contradictory—accumulated over a lifetime; and that so much of it lies, like an iceberg, hidden, unconscious, inarticulate, expressing itself only in distorted forms, out of the reach, not merely of the outsider, but of the individual himself.

Even more important is the fact that the Jew-hatred of the dangerous anti-Semite is not a casual bit of excess baggage, to be casually discarded. It is central to his personality. It is perhaps his most important defense in a harsh world, enabling him to operate in the midst of conflicting pressures and personal frustrations. To greater or less degree it protects him; and, needing it, he will fight to protect it.

The easy-going journalistic assumption that a mere *exposé* suffices to cure a social ill is naive or worse. As for advertising wisdom, what could LSMFT do, if it were a question, not of riding and channelizing cigarette buying, but of stopping the cigarette habit? We are beginning to understand the personality frustrations at the root of chronic alcoholism; how many *Lost Weekends* would it take to make a dent in the consumption of alcohol on, say, the Hollywood lots?

A second fact. The capacity of the infected personality to *evade* the impact of propaganda is amazing. A research institute interviewed individuals on their reactions to a series of cartoons caricaturing the bigot, in

broad tabloid style. Perhaps we need not be surprised that many people simply failed to understand the cartoons at all. But an astonishing number of those who understood the message simply evaded, in any one of a multitude of ways, making any connection between the message and its application to themselves.

The murderer in *Crossfire* is given a paper on which an address is written; obsessed by fear of capture he misreads it into the address of the house in which he killed his buddy. Write as plainly as you will the address of the social ills that plague the anti-Semite, and see him return unerringly to the scene of his ancient crime—the Jewish image he slays daily.

**T**HIRD, there is some indication that there is among Americans a growing negative reaction to propaganda—the "special interest" message in the sugar pill. Two wars and the ministrations of radio announcers have set up at least the beginnings of a definite consumers' resistance, especially in the field of ideas; people seem increasingly sophisticated as to sources, sceptical as to motives. (Paul F. Lazarsfeld's study of a recent Presidential campaign draws the conclusion that the whole concerted barrage of campaign propaganda played an insignificant role in changing the votes of those who had already made up their minds.) The Superman tolerance programs have evoked wide commendation among men of good will. But I know at least one 12-year-old Jewish boy, very much interested in prejudice, who doesn't think much of them. "Oh, they just do it because they get a lot of publicity; they expect people to say how wonderful they are; my friend Jimmy says, 'Who's paying for it?'" (Jimmy is Gentile.)

Fourth—and here, perhaps, we enter the realm of speculation. If we intend to place weight on the dramatic film for anti-prejudice messages, perhaps we should look a little more closely at the whole great American institution of "going-to-the-movies." The film, yes, but in its context—the mass attendance of our population, weekly, almost

religiously. *Almost* religiously? The sociologists have skimmed this extraordinary phenomenon, but the plain citizen can see a fact when it looms as high as a mountain—or a cathedral. Even if they try to throw you off by calling it a movie cathedral.

Once a week America goes to the movies to celebrate a kind of holiday of the natural man—to live in a world of dreams and myths, and of such strange forbidden things as violence, brawling, intrigue, murder, childhood fantasies, and curious loves. We sit and gaze with hungry absorption and our sons and daughters sit next to us, in a common congregation of, shall we say, adolescence.

There is a time and place for everything, says Ecclesiastes. If we introduced a striptease in an Episcopal church, the parishioners wouldn't like it. Perhaps a sudden sermon about Jews might fall on deaf ears when we are waiting to see the guns drawn, the detective beaten up, the blood flowing. Do we pay our money to have someone tell us about *Jews*?—*Somebody* is putting something over. . . .

And here we face some key mysteries. Does your young son sitting in the neighborhood movies identify himself with the cops or with the murderers? Is our movie-going three hours of sheer dream in which we live the life of unregenerate nature, cleansing our bosom of much perilous evil, so that we emerge better armed for the life outside? Or is our behavior shaped imitatively by the fair and foul images we see; if so, by which, and how much? Is the whole moral effect of the drama perhaps a complex mixture of all these possibilities?

**T**HE psychologists give us clues. Human beings have aggressions. These aggressions need expression. They can be expressed directly, indirectly, symbolically, orally, and/or in action—in good or harmful ways, socially speaking. Can these aggressions, deeply rooted in our society, be guided and redirected through art forms?

One hypothesis states that in a crime story we identify first with the criminal, participating in his evil-doing, exulting in

his freedom outside mores and conscience and law; and then when he gets his comeuppance, we exult that he, too, has to toe the mark like ourselves. For an hour we live the dual lives of hunter and hunted, of the social and the anti-social, of control and of instinct. From the tension, the interplay, and the final resolution of these two sides of our nature (so goes the hypothesis) we are given purgation, and sent out in the streets again relaxed, healthier, and more human. But there are other hypotheses.

Obviously, we need a lot of thinking here. For example, some psychiatrists warn us to avoid a too rational appeal. New, rational controls may only increase the dangerous pressures. Anti-Semitism may be an expression of the individual's resentment of the constriction of the big city industrial society in which he lives, deprived of outlets for his emotions. His parents check him; his teachers, his sergeant, his foreman, the traffic cop, the church, the law—everything and everybody checks him, holds him back. Perhaps the movies offer a harmless escape. Suppose that there, in those profane precincts, you confront him again with the law, preaching to him some more, checking him again. Is that the best way?

Do we know?

**A**S IT happens, the movies, since the day they began, have never accepted any responsibility to anything except the box-office.

Now, in 1947, film-makers for the first time are minded to make their medium a conscious social force, to lend their art to the purposes of enlightenment and progress. (Hopefully, without loss of profits, too—after all, novels of social significance are on the best-seller list.)

However, in order to accomplish his new high-minded aims, the movie-maker needs more than noble aspirations and a few resoundingly written messages; he needs a developed, mature art form, and it is just this that is lacking. For Hollywood, as far as art is concerned, is still in the nickelodeon business—at 60¢ per head—loges, 80¢.

As a matter of fact, the movies today are



further away from being art than they ever were; certainly, they are less an art than in the days of the silent film.

So we are back where we came in—but, we must say, in less than 90 minutes. You want to fight anti-Semitism, gentlemen—and more power to you—and you have in your hands the most powerful medium yet devised for the communication of art and enlightenment to a mass audience. Yet your ability to use it for the social ends you desire is still primitive. You have forgotten that, in a democratic society, if art is to influence people, it must, before anything else, be art. (Need we say that by art we do not mean the “arty,” but artistic means properly disposed for artistic ends, in terms of the particular work one has in hand?)

Now for art you need to respect yourself and you need to respect your audience—which, if you look at it with the eye of true democracy, is not the “common man” or the “masses,” but your brother.

There is no substitute, and there is no short-cut. You cannot fight anti-Semitism, or any other social evil, unless you uphold in your thinking and in your art the faith in the worth, the dignity of man, and that means the complexity and potentialities of man—every man. And that faith, and the sense of respect and responsibility that comes with it, must begin right in the studio.

You cannot free your brother's spirit by half-baked “progressive” catchwords or pious indoctrinations—no matter how well-intentioned—slipped into routine catch-penny thrillers and romances, written down to “the morons.”

**I**F THE problems we've raised here have made your ventures against anti-Semitism appear ringed with hopeless difficulties, that was not our intention.

But this is no light adventure, to be lightly polished off in a couple of story conferences. That's all we've been saying. If you're in, you're in for the duration—and the duration may be a matter of years.

Of course, we know that just as the seed-ground of anti-Semitism is mass frustration

growing out of economic and social inequality, so the final solution will come through political action. But political action, of the kind that will win the victory, is unthinkable without all the resources, responsibly used, of science, intelligence, and art to feed it and to foster it.

And in the concerted attack of the forces of art and science and education and religion that will finally beat down this thing, the dramatic film can play a great role.

But that's all pretty general, and you are practical men. Let's see what we can do in the way of immediate, practical suggestions:

1. Would it be tactless to say that you might, first of all, turn to the practitioners of thought and art themselves—I mean to serious writers, among them, hopefully, some with genuine social insight and more than superficial political understanding? The film drama is, I repeat, a work of art. Of course, you have writers, some of the most famous names on two continents. But you half-use writers, because you use them as tools. You pay the fiddler, so you call the tune. Maybe, after making sure you have the very best, you should let writers call the tune once in a while. After all, it is they whose lives are music.

In listening to propaganda experts and social scientists discuss *Crossfire*, I was impressed with the fact that much of their analysis turned on the internal relationships and fine adjustments of plot, character, dialogue, action, dramatic business, etc. These are problems of art. And in this side of the task, you need men whose life work is a struggle to bring the subtle and warring elements of knowledge and living experience into that harmony which is a living work of art, where all the various phases fall in, and maneuver, and march along to an inevitable conclusion, carrying along with it to that same inevitable conclusion the human being who reads or listens or looks.

For that two-way process of growing self-awareness (no, it is not I who do this foul thing, who hate my brother); and self-analysis (heaven, help me, it is I); and final act of purgation and self-understanding (Lord,

if it be thy will, I will try to do better—), for *that*, gentlemen, as I was saying, you need art.

2. At the same time, since you want your art to be responsible and effective in dealing with social problems, you need to know what you are fighting against and what you are fighting for. If you were doing a film on steel, you would build a steel mill that would make Elbert Gary purr. There is a huge accumulation of the results of research into race hatred by historians, sociologists, psychiatrists, psychologists, etc. There is a fund of information about how the anti-Semitic personality works: the roots of his aberration, the mechanisms that motivate him, and the facts that might reinfluence him.

There are also men with clinical experience and skills in dealing with those suffering from emotional abnormalities. You wouldn't film a naval battle without a host of experts and technical advisors. The material on race hatred isn't as simple as ballistics and logistics, but you can find men who can make it available to you. You can get three such good men for the price of one starlet.

We are not, of course, suggesting that you let science blue-print your films. What experts can do is to guide you, and tell you when you are defeating your own aims. One such expert would have been enough to save the producer of *Crossfire* from the ambiguities and possible boomerang effects that mar his effort.

3. Use the scientific testing techniques and methods of the content analysts and communications experts, who have been developing the relatively new science that studies how public understanding and behavior attitudes are influenced. Use these experts and their skills to test the impact of previous films, to pre-test audience response to parts of your films or to the actors in the key roles, and to test the completed film with different groups, areas, types of audience.

Find out what the spectators thought before the film; then ask them what they think after they've seen it. We will not pretend that completely reliable methods for testing movie-audience response have already been developed. You will have to further adapt existing techniques—polls, questionnaires, and interview-testing already in use by research institutes, advertising agencies, radio producers, and magazines—to the requirements of that more complex medium, the film drama, and develop new techniques, in addition.

If you undertake this, you can make an important contribution beyond your immediate task; you will be furthering scientific knowledge about the incidence and nature of group hatred in our population, as well as the effects and influence of art and education on the personality—matters about which we need to know so much and actually know so little. This would be a contribution to American life of the first importance.

NATURALLY, we are going to run into the dilemma of art and/or manipulation. The American public is suspicious of manipulation, for all ends except those of "consumer goods" consumption, and that public has every right to be suspicious. It goes to the movies for entertainment, not for lectures or self-improvement. The hand of the expert laid on too heavily would frighten art away and with it entertainment. The expert is to be used only as a check, not as the driving power.

In the end it comes to this: if you want to give social insight to the millions, and so help build a more decent society, your films must have that conviction that alone carries conviction. And for that you need the utmost knowledge, sympathetic imagination and art that you can muster—nothing less.

Gentlemen, how about really *working* at it?

Sincerely yours,  
ELLIOT E. COHEN

## THE AIMS OF BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

### *Remodeling an Empire While Building Socialism*

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

ANY aspect of British foreign policy must, to be understood, be viewed as part of a complex network whose ultimate purpose is to support the security of the United Kingdom, its empire, and the British Commonwealth. As there is scarcely a nation or area of the world with which it does not have relations, the makers of United Kingdom policy face a wider range of problems than those of any other nation. The inevitable conflicts of interests, both within the empire in its three broad divisions and between it and other nations, lead inevitably to contradictions, compromises, and lapses from strict justice. The very multiplicity of Britain's relationships around the globe make it particularly vulnerable to critics.

In the long view, all-over British foreign policy has at various historical stages been expansionist (from the late 18th century through the years of settlement of World War I), geared to defending the *status quo* (the period of appeasement just before World War II), and designed to cover a planned retreat (a consequence of World War II). Thus, anyone whose memory covers about fifty years of recent history has known United Kingdom policy in all three

phases at successive periods. It is ironic that today the British are reaping the sour fruits of the first two, in terms of world opinion, while actually pursuing, in their quiet way and at their own pace, the third.

Britain's intricate problem in foreign affairs can be outlined as follows: (a) the central point of reference is the United Kingdom, occupying a highly vulnerable insular position off the coast of Europe and suffering severe economic illness, which possesses (b) a vast colonial empire in various stages of political and economic development, the bulk of which will be in Africa, once India is free, and which it is now proposed to re-order on an extensive scale, and which is associated with (c) a commonwealth of autonomous nations, known as dominions, located in North America (Canada), the Southwest Pacific (Australia and New Zealand), southernmost Africa (the Union of South Africa), and a neighboring north Atlantic island (Eire). The United Kingdom considers her primary responsibility to be her own security and that of her colonial empire. In relation to the Commonwealth she has the responsibility of an associate; defensive and other obligations are therefore shared with the dominions.

This three-way division is matched by a strength stemming from the same three sources. That strength today is rather seriously debilitated at home\* and in a state of

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\* The difficult economic position of the United Kingdom hardly needs detailed demonstration here. The gist of the matter is that the country's capacity to produce is unequal to its needs for goods and services for home consumption and foreign trade. This crisis began before World War II, though the war sharply exacerbated it. The great coal crisis of February 1947 was symptomatic of the widespread difficulties, only unique in its dramatic effects. A far more serious crisis is probable in 1948 when the American loan will be exhausted.

flux in the colonies. But it is growing in the overseas associates of the Commonwealth.

The basic problems of the United Kingdom today are (a) to restore her own strength—currently being attempted on the basis of Labor party socialism; (b) successfully to redesign the colonial empire to strengthen the component parts economically and put their political relations with the mother country more on an associative than a compulsive basis; (c) to find a satisfactory basis for relations with the members of the Commonwealth; (d) and to do all this while maintaining in as large a measure as possible her traditional position as a great power.

Given a skillful disposition of available resources, and the prospect of their steady increase in the future, the United Kingdom has an excellent chance of remaining a great power. But the hard fact is that she cannot be more than a great power, while her partners of the Big Three, the United States and the USSR, are, or are certain to become, super-powers. And however the two partners of Britain in supreme world influence are ranked today, the United Kingdom is now and will remain the poor Number Three in the trinity.

**B**RTAIN's central problem of foreign relations is therefore to square her responsibilities with her resources and define her place between the United States and the USSR in such a fashion that she is subservient to neither.

This is a neat problem no matter from what angle it is approached. It is useless to speculate how the Conservatives under Churchill would have tackled it or how a Conservative government may deal with it if victorious in the election of 1950. The fact is that the job is now in the hands of the Labor party, with Ernest Bevin as Foreign Secretary. The Labor party, of course, has a domestic policy which complicates foreign relations to an unknown but undoubtedly important extent. Its domestic socialism, a complex mixture of political democracy, comprehensive social services, and national-

ized basic industries, together with regulated private enterprise, sets the United Kingdom off sharply from the United States with its official policy of private capitalist enterprise tempered by political democracy, and the USSR with its dictatorship and Stalinist communism. Since the Labor party is very far from monolithic, and the ideology strikingly amorphous in any case, the opportunities under the existing conditions for differences of opinion on which is the correct "socialist" solution of Britain's foreign-political problems are manifold. It has become fashionable to say that Bevin and the Cabinet are merely continuing Tory imperialism. Those who hold this view allege that the truly socialist position is expressed by Bevin's left-wing critics, who gave full expression to their views in their attack on him in November 1946, and again early this year in their pamphlet *Keep Left* (which, however, deals only in part with foreign policy), issued in anticipation of the annual Labor party conference in June. But this contrast is unjust to Bevin and grossly flattering to the left-wingers.

Bevin has sought to maintain friendly relations with both the United States and Russia while attempting to build up the United Nations as the bulwark of world peace. This is the policy that most Britishers would today regard as most desirable, if workable. Britain cannot afford to become too intimate with either of the super-powers, since to do so is to risk antagonizing the other. Her future depends upon the maintenance of peace between the United States and USSR, for a war between them would almost certainly be Britain's final ruination. The one would seize her for "defensive" reasons, the other for "offensive," and as the bone of contention between the two her utter destruction would be inevitable. If the atom bomb were used, no other issue is imaginable. The only way to avoid this fate is to avoid war. Since Britain can no longer even pretend to enforce Pax Britannica as an insurance against war, the obvious course is to get on the friendliest terms with both potential antagonists, at the same time rely-



ing heavily on the United Nations as a peace-enforcing organization. The United Nations is, on this showing, Britain's substitute for the power she no longer possesses.

This is an ideal program which Bevin has thus far been able only to approximate, though its existence is implicit in all his major speeches. Instead he has been forced into closer association with the United States than the program ideally requires.

As Bevin has several times insisted, this deviation has been forced upon him by the USSR in three ways: it has advanced policies in Europe and elsewhere which are unacceptable to Britain because they are undemocratic (by Western measurements), or jeopardize vital British interests directly, unmistakably and purposefully; it has refused to reciprocate proffers of friendship, and as Bevin once plaintively said, "Well, if I cannot get reciprocity, what can I do? I cannot make them reciprocate"; and it has engaged in a long-continued propaganda campaign against the United Kingdom, creating a thick atmosphere of ill-will, culminating perhaps in the *Pravda* attacks on all Right socialists in June 1947. (With utterly incredible but nevertheless delightful boorishness, *Pravda's* writer, Boris Penomaryev, singled out Harold Laski—yes, Harold Laski—as leader of the anti-Soviet Labor forces in the United Kingdom!)

By veering to the American side, Bevin, according to his own interpretation, has taken advantage of the liberal elements in American policy, not kowtowed to American capitalist opinion. In one of his key speeches he declared: "America may be a capitalist country. That does not mean she always will be. There are great forces moving in the United States, and when they move they move very quickly—they did in the war. When the United States offered us a twenty-five years' treaty to keep Germany disarmed . . . I welcomed it. So did my colleagues in the Government. . . . It is not for me or any foreign minister to question the economic system of another country; Russia is socialist, we are partly socialist, America may believe in private enterprise. . . . The great task of

Great Britain is to weld these forces together to keep the peace. . . . There are minds in America . . . which represent the flower of liberal and progressive thought, and when this finds its way through the State Department in proposals of this kind, am I going to say, 'I don't like you'? No, I grasp the hand of every progressive soul in the world in order to try and get peace."<sup>\*</sup>

THE left-wing critics of Bevin do not reject the general objective of his foreign policy.<sup>†</sup> They accept it. But they rather bitterly criticize the way in which the policy has been executed and interpret the deviation to the American side as more deliberate than

<sup>\*</sup> An illuminating Soviet version of Anglo-American relations is to be found in "Anglo-American Rivalry and Partnership: A Marxist View" by E. Varga, *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947. Many points could be made about this very odd performance, but I confine myself to the following: (1) much of the article traverses ground, uses data, and propounds conclusions about the United States' rise and Britain's decline in economic power that are commonplace with all students of the matter—no Marxist wisdom is required for this; (2) its defense of imperial preference aligns the author with the British reactionaries and ignores the British critics of the policy, who make a majority of British opinion, and also ignores—strange in a Marxist—the indisputable fact that neither Britain nor the Dominions can live and expand their economies within a closed empire—which is the direction in which imperial preference points; (3) it garbles the data on American policy to "establish" the foregone Marxist conclusion that "the ultimate aim of American policy is to break up the British Empire."; (4) it discovers "increasing opposition" to Bevin's policy on the Left—which recent events hardly ratify; and (5) it detects an opposition to totalitarian Communism in the Labor party leadership, but the why of it entirely escapes the author's understanding, and he ignores the patent fact that his leftist friends also base their case on *not being totalitarian*: they would use democratic socialism to frustrate the spread of totalitarian Communism. In brief, M. Varga's performance is replete with the characteristics of Soviet journalism: distortion, suppression of evidence, obtuseness, and a strong leaning toward nationalistic economic policy.

<sup>†</sup> Their leader is R. H. S. Crossman. Others are Michael Foot, Jennie Lee, R. W. G. Mackay, Sydney Silverman, Barbara Ayton Gould, and a dozen or so others whose names are not familiar to Americans. To the left of these are the two Communist members of Parliament and such figures as Koni Zilliacus. I refer here only to the Crossman group.

Bevin says is the case. The specific issues they have raised are in effect a review of the vulnerable points in British policy since the war: they have criticized British policy in Spain, Greece, Germany, and Palestine, but always within the larger context of British-American-Russian relations. The basis for their criticism is the proposition that "British social democracy has an historic role to play in proving to the world by her leadership and example that democratic socialism is the only final basis for a world government; and that it can, therefore, provide a genuine middle way between the extreme alternatives of American 'free enterprise' economics and Russian totalitarian socio-political life."

They argue that Bevin and his fellows have done little to give the world truly "socialist" leadership. But this is not what really gives their criticism a cutting edge. This is provided by the positions taken with regard to the United States and the USSR. The thesis advanced is that there is "growing tension" between the two and that Bevin has reacted with excessive hostility to Russia's aggressiveness, while deliberately soft-pedaling the aggressiveness of the United States. In their 1946 declaration, which best states their case, the leftists declared: "In a world becoming increasingly apprehensive of a growing tension between the Soviet Union and the United States it has become more and more obvious that 'security' measures taken by the USSR in expanding her 'sphere of influence' in Europe and the Mediterranean are the greatest cause of preoccupation to the government in the field of foreign affairs. These preoccupations appear most one-sided when they are not accompanied by concern or comment with regard to the extension of United States military bases from Greenland to the Faroes, from Japan to the Pacific Islands, and in the Mediterranean itself, notwithstanding the United States monopoly of the atomic bomb, her inflated military budget, and the capitalist expansionist nature of her economy. The continued existence of a United States-British combined Chiefs of Staff and the speeches of the CIGS [Chief of Imperial General Staff] in America have

allied us *de facto* with American imperialism and have tended to exacerbate those acute Soviet-American differences which are in part responsible for that Soviet 'intransigence' of which we continually and often complain. Whilst the United States extension of her military bases outside her immediate territorial waters has drawn no criticism from us, Soviet expansion is regarded as a menace to ourselves. . . ."

ON THIS interpretation of world currents, still used in *Keep Left*, the leftists' suggested course for the United Kingdom is Bevin's middle of the way reinterpreted to mean aggressive action to capture for Britain the leadership of all socialists in the world and, by expanding the area under socialist control, to amplify the basis for claiming that there really is a viable compromise between two apparently irreconcilable social systems.

Running through the declarations of Bevin's critics is the concealed major premise that Communism is less to be feared than American capitalism; and that in the world situation of today, Britain should deliberately play up to the Soviets. Communism, it is implied, is a close relative of British democratic socialism—perhaps a first cousin?—but American capitalism is related to neither and is an enemy to both. (The Russians, of course, reject this blood-relationship and find the Right socialists closely related to the capitalists.) By leaning to the American side, Bevin, they say, has given the democratic socialists of all lands a serious setback.

This is not the place to criticize the ideas of the left-wingers in detail. But it is perhaps relevant to remark that they heavily discount the power of American democracy, especially those liberal forces to which Bevin made reference and to which Prime Minister Attlee has often made reference, while offering an amusingly romantic interpretation of the forces at work in the USSR.

When the issues between Bevin and the leftists were first debated in the House of Commons, the anti-American phobias of the dissenters were given a thorough airing, and the truly liberal *Manchester Guardian*



*Weekly* (itself often a stern critic of American policy) declared editorially: "... the revolt... has exposed the depths of illiberalism into which Marxian and quasi-Marxian ideology has dragged some sections of the Labor party. The anti-Americanism which peeped out in so many of the speeches is a disquieting revelation of how far some of our friends of the Left have drifted away from the ideals which the Labour movement has always cherished. . . . It will be soon enough to denounce the United States when it has withdrawn its cooperation from all the agencies of the United Nations, agencies most of which have yet to be favored with the support and cooperation of Soviet Russia. With all its defects the Government seems to be applying international Socialist and Liberal principles, as most people have understood them, with more conspicuous logic and certainly with more common sense than its critics."

When *Keep Left* appeared, *The Economist*, in a devastating review, noted that "There is the usual irresponsible mixture of insults hurled at American policy with demands that America shall provide large sums of money, without conditions."

The leftists were soundly beaten at the 1947 conference of the Labor party and Bevinism remains triumphant. Yet even this debacle does not mean that leftism is dead. Not only are Crossman and Foot active and astute publicists, but also their sentiments parallel those of several powerful trade-union leaders. The leftists will persist, linking up with Henry Wallace and his followers in the United States, whom they resemble in character and, it seems, ultimate significance. It was the leftists, of course, who invited Wallace to visit Britain, with the results known to the whole civilized world. It is highly significant that while the failure of Russia to join in carrying out the Marshall plan put Britain more decisively than ever in the American camp, Bevin's stand on this issue was indorsed by the Crossman rebels.

From this review of a domestic quarrel, it is apparent that while the British are

unanimous in wishing to occupy a middle position between the United States and the USSR in foreign as well as in domestic social-economic policy, how to turn the trick is quite another matter. The man in the middle is always in an uncomfortable situation when his partners on the bench are, so he thinks, pushing and shoving to get at one another and neither is especially sympathetic to his aspirations. It is a tough spot for any nation, and it is made all the tougher by the difficult tasks which Britain is simultaneously carrying out, notably domestic reconstruction and colonial reform.

THE program of colonial reform in which Britain is engaged has been given too little attention by Americans. The popular fiction that Labor is imperialist, apparently because it does not precipitately throw away the colonial heritage, makes any candid discussion seem far more defensive than it really is.

Americans are altogether too prone, in their stygian ignorance of conditions in the colonies, to believe that where freedom is not granted forthwith, ruthless exploitation must infallibly exist. In reality the whole affair is a matter of gradations of gray. While it would be sheer effrontery to pretend that colonial peoples and resources are not being exploited for the benefit of white settlers and investors, the problems of the colonies cannot be solved merely by removing the political machinery of the dominant power.

The basic problem in almost all colonies is the low productivity of the working population. Since subsistence agriculture creates little taxable income and allows for very limited savings, the accumulation of capital is a difficult if not impossible task. Where mines and plantations exist, much can be done to give the colonies a more equitable share of the profits by changes in the system of taxation, but it is highly doubtful that a perfect solution can be found in this fashion for the money problem. To advance, the colonies must have larger revenues for current expenditures and more capital for

the financing of long-term developmental works. If the latter are properly designed and executed, they will, over a period of years, improve the condition of the people, raise their incomes, and provide the economic basis for an ever-increasing capacity for helping themselves.

The thing to do meanwhile is to supplement local revenues and capital resources by gifts and advances from outside. Few colonies today can hope to be both self-supporting and capable of making rapid economic progress. Current expenditures on education, health programs, or so on, will pay out in the long run in terms of a people better able to handle their own affairs. Capital investments in public works—transport and irrigation facilities—and productive enterprises from elementary processing plants to more elaborate factories serving local markets, will provide a sounder economy for the newly trained citizenry to run. To finish off the structure, provision must also be made for a systematic infiltration of the government service by natives trained to higher levels in advance of most of their countrymen—a common phenomenon in almost all colonies—as a prelude to increasing responsibility for administration and as an earnest of the time when general responsibility will be transferred to native hands. This is the sound road to freedom for colonial peoples.

The British colonial world is so complex that such a description of policy will roughly correspond to reality at some points and be so at variance at others as to be almost utopian. But it nevertheless does correspond to a reasonable degree to the program the British are now trying to install in their colonies.

The basic troubles they are bound to have, with the best will in the world, are these: British timing is apt to be leisurely, too slow both for the native leaders and foreign critics, and British financial resources are far too limited to supply anything like the needed money, either for current expenditures or capital investment. These handicaps exist whether or not the pattern of economic development is to be capitalist

or socialist. Moreover, a formidable obstacle, especially in Africa where there is most to be done, is the opposition the white settlers and investors are bound to express to any program that appears to jeopardize their favored position. In the past this kind of opposition has been the cause of the sorry gap between policy as expressed verbally in recent years by the Colonial Office and practice in the colonies. Worse still, in Africa the evil influence of the Union of South Africa, with its "white supremacy" policies, is pervasive in the colonies to the north. The future of the British colonies, while in large part a matter of economics, is conditioned by racist ideas comparable to those which burden life in the American South.

THESE generalized remarks could readily be given particular application. The direction of British policy is clear. The ultimate objective is dominion status. But the world well knows that once a colony has achieved a position where dominion status might be the next logical step, the longer step to freedom entirely outside the British community seems far more attractive. This is true of India and Burma. It is notable that in both instances the Labor government does not propose to put any obstacles in the way.

A major point to keep in mind about the colonial empire is its unevenness, both economically and politically. The United Kingdom has shown a sincere desire to advance the colonies toward dominion status, a task which has both economic and constitutional aspects. On the one side there is the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, originally passed in 1940, extended in 1945 to authorize the spending of \$480,000,000 over ten years' time, to which has lately been added a Colonial Development Corporation with borrowing powers of \$400,000,000, while on the other there are the constitutional changes, insuring more local responsibility, in Jamaica, Ceylon, Cyprus, Malta, and Malaya since the end of the war. Finally there are the negotiations to grant India and Burma either dominion status or independence, as they elect, and the negotiations

for the withdrawal of British armed forces from Egypt.

While this program involves the expenditure of considerable sums of money, the theme running through it is that, immediately or ultimately, the costly responsibilities of the United Kingdom must be lessened—immediately, as when full responsibility is handed over to the Indians, ultimately, when the economies of backward colonies are suitably strengthened. In the latter connection, especially, the British apparently hope that a heavier burden at this time will mean a progressively lighter burden in future years. It is all part of the task of squaring British responsibilities more accurately with capacity to meet them. The humanitarian, idealistic, and socialistic crosscurrents which also run in this stream do not entirely obscure this fundamental aspiration.

WHAT is currently happening in India offers by far the most spectacular illustration of what the "devolution" of the British Empire means in actual practice. It can hardly be alleged that the withdrawal of Britain is voluntary in the strictest sense, for that would ignore the activities of the Indian leaders over the years, but in the language of politics, it is voluntary in that the British are leaving without putting their authority to the test of armed force. A ruling class is giving up its power without a fight—or without a final, devastating, and bitter fight. It is probably correct to say that the British could no longer rule in India, even if they chose to try, that their power has been decisively undermined by events, and that therefore the only thing voluntary about their withdrawal is the acceptance of the inevitability of ultimate violent ejection. But reason as one may, the fact remains that we are witnessing the incredible spectacle of a colonial power withdrawing from a colony and negotiating the transfer of political authority to the colonial leaders, even at the risk that the new authorities will elect to declare their independence. In the case of the British dominions, where a similar devolution took place earlier, the possibility

that independence would follow was relatively remote.

Indeed, the British are so willing to leave at this juncture that they have even agreed to the division of India into Hindustan and Pakistan, a move necessitated by the stubborn realities of the Indian racial and religious and political divisions, though they must privately deplore the breaking up of that large element of governmental and economic unity which they had imposed upon the country and which, beyond a doubt, contributed somewhat to its welfare. The splitting up of India is a reversion to past divisiveness and is far more than a convenient apportionment of the country for administrative purposes; it means also sundering the railways and the irrigation systems, separating the jute mills of Calcutta (in Hindustan) from their sources of supply (in Pakistan) and generally setting going forces which, if not checked and guided, will damage the economy; and it can mean, if separatism gets out of hand, the Balkanization of the subcontinent. But what happens next is on the heads of the Indian leaders. It will be conclusively demonstrated, I think, that Indian happiness and welfare do not exclusively turn on who controls and works the political machinery.

On the other hand, the consequences of the move to the United Kingdom are easy to exaggerate. The transfer of political power will not be accompanied by an ending of economic relations. They will be extensively readjusted and redefined. Properties will pass into Indian hands, Indian capital and its representatives will enter concerns hitherto exclusively British, but it need cause no surprise if, on balance, British-Indian economic relations continue to be a source of strength and profit for Britain. This will be true even if a far from perfect solution of what to do about Britain's debt to India—the problem of the sterling balances—has eventually to be accepted. India, independent or a group of dominions—this question is not yet settled—will still sell to and buy from Britain. It may be discovered that in economic terms, the withdrawal from India,

far from damaging the United Kingdom, will actually better her position, since her political responsibilities will be negligible.

Nor is it absolutely certain that Britain's imperial defence system will be decisively damaged. Little has been said publicly about this. But from stray hints it would appear that it is realized on both sides that collaboration for the control of the Indian Ocean, which India commands and which is vital to the British—the dominions of Australia and South Africa have coasts on the Indian Ocean, and so do the British East African colonies—is a necessity from which there is no escape. It may turn out that in this respect, India's independence will change things about as little as the independence of the Philippine Commonwealth will change the American defence position in the Western Pacific.

**P**ALESTINE offers the British a conundrum even more difficult to deal with than India, but one which seems likely to be solved in much the same way—by partition. The particulars widely differ, the basic solution will probably prove similar. The British in Palestine have made all the shattering and inexplicable mistakes of which they are so gorgeously capable. They have compounded their folly by an indecisiveness, especially in the last decade, which has proved far worse than a bad policy consistently executed. And now, as in India, they have reached the stage where final and decisive action must be taken.

The question of Palestine is complicated by far more than the violent disagreements of the Jews and the Arabs; it is complicated more significantly by the fact that the country is strategically located in the Middle East, one of several foci of the struggle between Soviet Russia and the West, and the fact that the most readily exploitable resource of the area is oil, a key commodity for industrialized nations. (American dependence on oil needs no elaboration; Britain currently is increasing her dependence by a national campaign to switch over from coal to oil as a basic reliance for power generation in indus-

try and transport.) There is no visible prospect that the struggle to control the Middle East, for these two reasons, will either abate or come to a head in the near future. The appearance of the United States as a front-rank contestant is the only new factor in the situation, which antedates World War II.

The British have these two interests, and the more ancient one of preventing the Russians (or any other potentially hostile power) from gaining too easy access either to the Mediterranean or Indian Oceans—and especially the latter. In respect to the Indian Ocean, Palestine must be held in line with British necessities in a fashion comparable to Iraq and Iran.

This complex of problems has made Britain shilly-shally in Palestine. I would also point out that here, as elsewhere in the colonial world, Britain has humanitarian-economic purposes: she intends, or hopes, to take action to improve Middle Eastern living standards. The chief beneficiaries will be the Arabs. But this is merely, I fear, a weak crosscurrent, not a determining force. If some solution in Palestine can be found that will not weaken Britain's position in relation to her basic interests, it will, I think, be accepted. The abandonment by Russia of her pro-Arab, anti-Zionist position, and Gromyko's acceptance of partition as a possible solution,\* open the way. I therefore predict that Britain will move out of a par-

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\* What Gromyko's speech at UN really meant is difficult to fathom. Perhaps the USSR is merely unprepared at present to bring the Middle Eastern question to a decisive showdown and regards the pacification of Palestine as utterly unimportant to her ultimate aims. Gromyko's stand appears to have created a sensation in Palestine, largely because of its superficially pro-Zionist tenor. But it is hardly safe to believe that Russia is now pro-Zionist; it is tactically so for the moment, perhaps, but it still has other fish to fry, and only last year Stalin was saying "Zionism is a reactionary-nationalist tendency that has its followers among the Jewish bourgeoisie, intelligentsia, and the most backward sections of the Jewish workers. The Zionists strive to isolate the Jewish working masses from the common proletarian struggle." Maybe the idea is that if Palestine becomes two small, weak states instead of the ward of a large one, the "common proletarian struggle" will go rather easier for the Communists.



tioned Palestine, on a date soon to be fixed, in much the same fashion as she will shortly move out of India. It will then, as in India, be up to the inheritors of power to deal with the problems that remain, including the suppression of the terrorists who reject partition. How this will affect the displaced persons in Europe is impossible to say.

THE relations of the United Kingdom and the dominions are on a unique footing which few Americans trouble to really understand. Their worst error is to confuse dominions and colonies. The five dominions, however, are equal associates of the United Kingdom in the British Commonwealth. For some years prior to the war they were equal in status but not in function, particularly in regard to foreign affairs. A striking change during the war has been the expansion of the foreign services of all the dominions and the emergence from comparative obscurity in this field of a dominion like Australia. When the leaders of the dominions—excepting Eire, which consistently remains aloof—met in London in early 1945, it was apparent that the unquestionable predominance of the United Kingdom in the formation of British Commonwealth policies was at an end. If the United Kingdom is still, by all measures, the most important member of the Commonwealth, it is as a large state, a bit reduced in stature by events, associated with a group of small states rapidly recruiting strength and prestige. To erase any hint of United Kingdom domination, the name of the office handling relations between the United Kingdom and the Dominions will soon be changed from Dominions Office to Commonwealth Relations Office. The King's title may also be changed similarly. Ernest Bevin speaks for the United Kingdom only, Dr. H. V. Evatt for Australia, and so on. Bevin speaks for all the Commonwealth only when he is authorized to do so. America loaned the British Commonwealth nothing; it was the United Kingdom that borrowed the money and assumed the attendant obligations. And so on.

Correctly understood, this development is all to the advantage of the United Kingdom. About the only thing that is damaged by the emergence of the dominions is the pride of the more imperialist Britishers. The stronger the dominions become, the stronger the Commonwealth becomes. As a member, the United Kingdom benefits from this increased strength. It should not be assumed that the strength of the dominions, either individually or in association, is "on call" for the United Kingdom. Far from it. The dominions make their own decisions and promote their own policies, as all observers must have noticed at recent international conferences. But the way in which the informal machinery of association operates insures that headlong public conflicts among the associates are rare. That machinery has been well described by Dr. Evatt of Australia: "It is necessary to understand the real nature of consultations . . . It is seldom the intention to arrive at formal agreements. Consultation takes varying forms. There are matters which are almost exclusively the responsibility of the United Kingdom Government, or some other government of the British Commonwealth. In these cases the government responsible informs other interested members of its decisions or proposed decisions. A second form of consultation concerns matters of more general concern to the Commonwealth members, but which in the ultimate is the responsibility of one of the governments. In this case opportunity is usually given, before decisions are made, for any other government concerned to express its views or to advise. The government with ultimate responsibility is not bound to accept that advice, and may or may not modify its final decisions. A third form of consultation occurs in relation to matters in which more than one member of the British Commonwealth share responsibility. In this case consultation begins at the earliest stages, and the final decision is one to which all concerned have contributed and with which all agree. The arrangements for seeing that these consultations take place are not rigidly formalized."

Amicable relations between the United Kingdom and the dominions, now in many respects more important to the former than the latter, though on balance vital to both, must be worked out in this fashion. What this means in terms of actual policies would require a detailed review not only of United Kingdom policy but of the policies of each of the dominions. A bird's eye view of the current situation would reveal, I think, that the United Kingdom is today gaining more strength from her association with the overseas dominions than at any time in the history of the Commonwealth in spite of cross-currents, notably those set going by industrialization of overseas countries like Canada and Australia, which appear momentarily to be working in the opposite direction.

A conspicuous development of major import is the growth of regional arrangements between the dominions themselves and between the dominions and foreign countries, notably in the cases of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The close Canadian association with the United States needs no elaboration. The efforts of Australia and New Zealand to work out a joint defence system in the Southwest Pacific, and a social policy for the Pacific islands south of the equator, in collaboration with the United States, the Dutch, the French, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, are of an equal order of importance.\* In proportion

\* Australian initiative in the Pacific can be illustrated by three recent, or prospective, events. In February 1947 an agreement was signed at Canberra by the nations named above establishing a South Pacific Commission to deal with social and economic policy in the islands. In June the Governor of Portuguese Timor was guest of the Australian Governor-General at Canberra, indicating the possibility of Portuguese collaboration in the commission. On Australian initiative, a British Commonwealth Conference on the terms of peace with Japan will be held at Canberra beginning August 22, 1947. This is regionalism at work. Australia leads, the United Kingdom participates to the extent of her immediate interests.

as such projects succeed, there can be no question but that the United Kingdom profits, if only in the negative sense of being relieved of responsibilities she might otherwise be looked to to carry alone. It is all part of the process of devolving what used to be imperial burdens on the dominions or, in reverse, part of the process by which the dominions express their increasing maturity. This shifting of the center of gravity in the British Commonwealth is bound to go on into the future. The balance will increasingly be tipped toward the dominions as they gain in individual strength.

THE task set the United Kingdom by the consequences of history is, on any showing, an extremely difficult one. The task itself is not socialist in character, but by an accident of politics, a socialist government has been given the job of dealing with it. It must carry out the job with an historical inheritance at its back and in a contemporary situation of immense and confusing complexity, replete with uncertainties. Errors in tactics are bound to be made; errors in strategy are not unlikely. Success, as Bevin once remarked, will only be noted, if at all, in ten, twenty, even fifty years.

What we are really witnessing is not the precipitate collapse of an empire, comparable in kind to the collapse of the Empire State Building, but the readjustment of a highly complex economic-political structure to unprecedented circumstances. So viewed, it is a performance full of drama, but with the ultimate outcome known only to the omniscient. Lesser folk, deprived by nature of the power of reading crystal balls, can only sit fascinated, observe, comment, and perhaps on occasion wonder at the involutions of a spectacle unparalleled in history.

It is not every day that men try to remodel an empire and effect simultaneously an orderly transition from capitalism to socialism.

## THE ADVENTURES OF ILYA EHRENBURG

### *Portrait of an Artist as a Soviet Journalist*

MARTIN THOMAS

"MY LIFE resembles a vaudeville act with many changes of costume, but I am not a ham. I am only trying to be obedient."

"I don't believe in anything at all. It is not my fault, this is how I am made up. My backbone is so crooked that nothing can straighten it."

"I am a turn-coat, a petty cheat, and, on the whole, a pretty nasty character with idealistic, dreaming eyes."

These are some of the things Ilya Ehrenburg says about himself in his books. He certainly doesn't mean all of this, but he probably believes at least part of it. He is constantly struggling with himself in his works of fiction, killing the protagonists who represent his ego. We hardly need Freud to tell us that this sort of spiritual self-castigation usually reflects a feeling of guilt.

Ilya Ehrenburg is best known in this country as the Number One Soviet journalist. But there is much more to Ehrenburg than that. For many years he was one of the most brilliant Russian novelists. But his more recent novels are chiefly interesting as working demonstrations of the effect of totalitarianism on creative art. Ehrenburg relinquished his freedom as an artist. Today his fiction can hardly be classed as literature at all.

As Ehrenburg wrote once, there are two ways to get past a fence: you can jump over it, or you can crawl under it on your stomach.

He finally chose to crawl, but it is only fair to say that once upon a time he tried to jump.

ILYA EHRENBURG was born in Moscow in 1891. His father was an engineer and a business man, his grandfather one of the wealthiest sugar magnates in the Ukraine. His parents did not always observe the Sabbath, but they did observe Yom Kippur and the other more important Jewish holy days. Their food was kosher and they kept a special set of dishes for the Passover. Ilya began to study Hebrew at an early age, even before he was ten. He had a private tutor who came to his home several times a week; when Ilya reached college, the same tutor studied Talmud with him.

He was fourteen at the time of the Revolution of 1905. Three revolutionary parties were then active in Russia: the Bolsheviks, the Mensheviks, and the Socialist-Revolutionists. Each of these parties had illegal circles in the colleges, usually led by party members. Ehrenburg joined a Bolshevik group, probably because this group had the largest following in his college.

The circles met in private homes. Their basic book was Bogdanov's *Political Economy*; from that they would progress to Marx. After reading a chapter or two of *Das Kapital*, a student member would report on it to the rest of the group. The groups included both boys and girls; the boys could impress the girls only by well prepared reports on their reading. Those were enthusiastic times.

At the age of sixteen, Ilya was expelled from college for revolutionary activities—with a so-called "wolf's ticket," which meant that he could not transfer to another school. But Ilya's father succeeded in having the

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wolf's ticket withdrawn, and Ilya was able to continue his education.

At seventeen, Ilya was already attending regular workers' meetings. At that time, he was known in party circles as "Ilya the Long-Haired," because of the rarely cut black hair which fell over his forehead during his heated speeches. News of these speeches soon reached the police. Ilya was arrested and spent more than a year in jail before the authorities agreed to let him out on bail. His father put up the bond, but on condition that Ilya immediately leave the country. Ilya accepted these terms and left illegally for France.

In Paris, party comrades met Ehrenburg with open arms. But prison affects each man differently. Some it strengthens in their beliefs; others it breaks. Ehrenburg was not exactly broken, but he was a little disillusioned, and began to lose his taste for politics. For some time he attended Bolshevik meetings held in a hall behind the old café Pantheon in the Boulevard St. Michel, but soon he abandoned politics altogether.

This was naturally very pleasing to his family, but their joy was premature. A new blow soon struck the Ehrenburgs: friends in Paris informed the father that Ilya had decided to enter a monastery.

THE heroes and heroines of 19th-century European novels often entered monasteries or convents as a way out of their sufferings, never encountering any difficulties in doing so. In reality, the thing is not so easily accomplished. French monasteries usually require a rather large entrance fee from the novices. In addition, Ehrenburg was a Jew, and, out of regard for his family, he did not wish to undergo formal conversion. In the end, he had to give up the idea, and his father, learning of his decision, resumed the regular monthly checks.

But Ilya did not forsake Christianity. For the next few years he moved in two different worlds. One was the world of Catholicism and of Catholic priests, mainly Jesuits, often men of great intellectual gifts. Ehrenburg would discuss religion with them in

night-long sessions, and he enthusiastically studied religious books and the history of Catholicism in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

Ehrenburg's other world was the small cafés along the Boulevard St. Michel. He now carefully avoided the Pantheon, where the group of Russian Marxists congregated, and began to patronize La Source, another café a few blocks down the Boulevard, where young painters and poets gathered. The rising star among the painters was Diego Rivera, whose fame did not as yet go beyond the confines of the Boul'Mich. Ehrenburg became his closest friend and admirer. Rivera encouraged Ehrenburg to paint. Ehrenburg's paintings were not bad, but they couldn't stand comparison to Rivera's. Then the Mexican, who was at that time a cubist, made a rather unorthodox portrait of Ilya which the latter did not like at all; long arguments on cubism eventually shattered the friendship and drove Ehrenburg to the poets' corner of La Source. Soon after, he took up writing poetry.

At the beginning of 1914, he published his first book, *Verses to the Madonna*, a volume saturated with religious fervor. The poems were uneven in quality, sometimes reaching a high level, sometimes falling flat, but all of them expressed the same thing: a profound personal identification with Catholicism.

When World War I broke out, Ehrenburg became the Paris correspondent of the Petrograd (now Leningrad) daily, *The Stock Exchange News*. It was a slightly liberal, very patriotic, and rather yellow paper. Ehrenburg's dispatches were steeped in nationalism, even in chauvinism. These were his first steps in journalism; all that can be said of them is that they certainly did not increase his stature as a writer. He knew that and he wasn't too happy. His chauvinism was part of a new effort to find a spiritual home; it was too crude and too synthetic to ring true; the feeling of not-belonging must have grown all the stronger.

The Russian Revolution offered a different opportunity. In 1917, Ehrenburg remembered his revolutionary past and hoped



at last to find his lost soul. He made up his mind to return immediately to Russia and to devote himself wholeheartedly to revolutionary activities.

This was not easy to do, for there were no communications with Russia and the war still raged on all fronts. But he learned of the now famous sealed train in which the German General Staff was to allow Lenin and other Russian revolutionaries to cross the Reich and return to Russia. Only one such train is usually mentioned. Actually, there were five or six. Ehrenburg couldn't get into any of them. His ties with the Bolsheviks had long been severed, and his articles in the *Stock Exchange News*, not to mention his side-excursions into Catholicism, had alienated him still more from his former friends. The men to whom Ehrenburg appealed merely shrugged their shoulders.

He turned to Lenin. Lenin didn't know or didn't remember the name of Ehrenburg, but he remembered "Long-Haired Ilya," of whom he had heard in years past. Lenin liked to quote an old Russian proverb which said that in a large household even a bit of string may be of some use. All the more so in a Revolution. With Lenin's help, Ehrenburg eventually secured a place in one of the sealed trains and left Zurich for Russia.

A few months later the Bolsheviks overthrew the Kerensky government and seized power.

EHRENBURG spent almost four years in Russia as an active participant in the Revolution, but by 1921 he had become a bitter adversary of the Bolshevik regime. He went to Berlin, at that time the center of Russian emigrants, and he became very active among the disaffected.

While still in Russia, he had written a new volume of poetry, *A Prayer for Russia*, which appealed so highly to the White Russian generals that they had some of the poems reprinted in their army newspapers.

The leaders of the anti-Soviet movement were soon disappointed in him, for he

harped always on one subject, attacking the Bolsheviks for destroying ancient Russian churches and other historical relics, and he avoided taking a clear political stand. When pressed to broaden his position, he would speak of a novel he was then writing. This novel, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Julio Jurenito and His Disciples*, appeared a year later and almost immediately made its author famous all over the world. It was translated into many languages, including English.

*Jurenito* is a satirical novel, which attacks socialism as well as capitalism. The hero, Jurenito the Mexican, is an allegorical figure, a sort of Mephistopheles who seeks to destroy the whole world, not excluding Russia with her pseudo-socialistic system. Ehrenburg has Jurenito say of this system that its high sounding slogans serve only one purpose: to transform human beings into automatons, unable to think for themselves. When arrested in Russia by the Tcheka (now GPU-NKVD), Jurenito addresses its chieftains thus: "Yours is a great task upon this Earth. You must convince the people that the fetters into which you throw them are in reality the embraces of a loving mother." And just before his death, Jurenito—certainly voicing the author's own thoughts—sends "his last kiss to all brothers who have no program and no principles, who are naked and despised, and who only love the howling wind and adventure."

Ehrenburg published his book in Berlin, but it was soon reprinted in Russia, where it went through many editions. This was still possible in those days: at about the same time, on Lenin's demand, a still sharper criticism of the Soviet regime appeared in Moscow: Arkady Averczenko's famous *Twelve Stabs in the Back of the Revolution*.

Ehrenburg in the meantime moved to Paris and began writing more novels, one after another, with amazing speed. He did most of his work at a table of the Café de la Rotonde in the Boulevard Montparnasse; when this cafe was modernized in 1926, he

moved across the street to the Coupole. The Coupole was open night and day, never closing for a single minute. It was cleaned at four in the morning, at which time the patrons were asked to move to the tables on one side, and then back again to the other. Ehrenburg was perhaps the steadiest witness of this ceremony.

Hundreds of people knew his stooped figure with long, almost simian arms. He sat hour after hour writing and smoking his pipe, but he never minded interruptions; he was a brilliant and amusing talker, though at this period a most cynical one. In talks with his friends, he took pains to emphasize that he believed in nothing, not even in God; the religious period of his life was definitely over. Instead of beliefs, he now cultivated his hatreds, especially a hatred for all so-called great men, whom he held responsible for all the calamities of mankind. Once, in 1926, a French writer came to the Coupole directly from a lecture on Madame Curie-Sklodovska, the discoverer of radium. When he said that here, surely, was a great woman who had devoted her life solely to the good of humanity, Ehrenburg scoffed: "Wait a few years and you'll see other great men making the most powerful bombs in the world from this radium of hers!"

WHEN the Nazis took power in 1933, they publicly burned all the books they didn't approve of. The Russians did not burn books, but after the Moscow trials most of the books published during the revolution simply disappeared. Nobody knows what happened to them.

Among the books which disappeared were many of Ehrenburg's novels. When he published them, he was often severely criticized in the Soviet press, but his books were widely read and there is no doubt that they influenced quite a few young Soviet writers between World Wars I and II. At present it is almost impossible to find copies of his early novels in Russia. One reason for their withdrawal is that Trotsky, Bukharin, and other early Bolsheviks are

often mentioned in them. ("He speaks like Trotsky!" remarks one of Ehrenburg's heroes. "Every sentence contains an idea.") But there is another, more fundamental reason. Ehrenburg was a good and serious artist, and his Communist and non-Communist characters were always rounded and truthful artistic creations. This means more than that the reader could "recognize" them, or identify himself with them; any second-rate but technically clever writer can concoct a story or a novel that the reader will "believe" in. Ehrenburg made of his protagonists meaningful embodiments of the real moral and psychological problems of social upheaval and revolution, and as the Russian Revolution solidified in the totalitarian mold, the clear-sightedness of the artist Ehrenburg became a danger. What was needed now was a simpler art that could deny the complications and the alternatives of a more fluid day.

In *A Street in Moscow*, one of Ehrenburg's novels, a certain Pankratov, one of the *nouveaux-riches* of the Revolution, points out a Soviet policeman to a friend and says: "This policeman is no longer defending the proletariat, the international revolution or any such thing. He is there on the street to defend me and my money." Ehrenburg wrote this novel when the bureaucratic *parvenu* was still a comparative rarity in the Soviet Union; but even then, at the very beginning of the period that was to end with the formation of a new ruling class, Ehrenburg saw the danger.

Good literature precedes life. Many of Ehrenburg's fictional heroes are still alive in Soviet Russia, in the flesh, and we can find their early histories in Ehrenburg's novels. There is Nikolai Kurbov (*The Life and Death of Nikolai Kurbov*), for example, who had already lost all belief; there is Mikhail Lykov of *The Profiteer*, the Communist Yur of *Summer, 1925*, and many others. Left without beliefs, without enthusiasm, without anything to hold on to, they became blind functionaries carrying out not ideas but "policies" that had only

the most formal connection with the revolutionary spirit that moved them in their youth. Is it surprising that the bureaucracy should wish to suppress the work of an artist who depicted the inner mechanism of their development? The only wonder is that the artist himself came at last to join them.

PERHAPS the most typical of Ehrenburg's early works is a novel entitled *The Uncommon Life of Lasik Roitschwantz*. Lasik is a Jewish tailor from a small town, a man caught in the Revolution but not of it. While the world heaves, Lasik meditates about theoretical problems within the Jewish tradition. (Ehrenburg could never have written this book had he not studied the Talmud at an early age.) Arrested in Moscow for an alleged violation of the law, he remains unconcerned with what may happen to him, and becomes deeply engrossed in a problem that suddenly comes to his mind: if two Jews found a *tallis* on the street—who would be the rightful owner? The one who first saw the *tallis* or the one who picked it up? In other words, which is more important—the eye or the hand? At another and no less dangerous moment, Lasik considers whether or not a pious Jew may eat an egg laid on the Sabbath.

For Lasik these meditations are a form of escapism, a device for ignoring what he cannot control. "Happiness," he says, "is a word from an old dictionary that no longer exists." One could, of course, as others did, change one's name to "Spartacus Rosa-Luxemburgski" or "Apollo Entusiastoff," but even that would not help much. "When History walks the streets," says Lasik, "all the common man can do is to die with a look of ecstasy on his face."

The highlight of the novel is a story which, according to Lasik, was told by old Jews in his home town. It is a tale about the zaddik of Berdichev and his quarrel with God. This is how the story goes:

There once lived in Berdichev a Jew by the name of Meisl, a selfish and covetous man, who never performed a good deed in

his life. When he died and appeared before God, nobody would put in a good word for him. So the zaddik himself decided to plead for Meisl before the Almighty. "You cannot blame Meisl," he told God, "for he never saw good deeds rewarded on earth. You promised him, as well as other Jews, that you would send Messiah down to earth, but you didn't keep your promise, and Meisl gave up hope of ever seeing Messiah, and he stopped believing in him, and so did many other Jews I know. Why don't you send Messiah? When are you going to do it?"

"You may have something there," replied God. "Let's talk about it."

The zaddik produced many arguments in favor of sending Messiah immediately and God was virtually convinced. But at that very moment the zaddik happened to see that one Hirsh, a very old and poor Jew, was dying in Berdichev—and only he, the zaddik, could save him. So he did not finish his talk with God, but went down to earth and saved Hirsh. And God became angry with him, and did not send Messiah down to earth.

Later, when the zaddik was criticized for his action and told that the salvation of humanity was surely more important than the life of an old Jew, he replied:

"No. The life of a human being should not be sacrificed even for the happiness of all mankind."

ONLY a few years after he told this little story, Ehrenburg saw the light. The French say that there are two kinds of marriage: *mariage d'amour* and *mariage de raison*. The marriage entered into by Ehrenburg with the Kremlin was undoubtedly a *mariage de raison*—for both parties. Russia's rulers wanted Ehrenburg, who was a famous writer, well-known not only in Russia, but also in Germany, France, and nearly all other European countries. Ehrenburg, too, had important reasons for making peace with the Soviet authorities. The lack of a literary convention enabled—and still enables—the Soviet government to publish

books written by authors who live abroad without paying them any royalties; only those considered friendly to the regime receive their writers' fees from Moscow. It is also possible that the strong, nationalist, and imperialist Russia of Stalin was more to the liking of the former correspondent of the *Stock Exchange News* than the Russia he had left in 1921.

During the first years of his political marriage Ehrenburg maintained a certain degree of dignity and independence. It was not until the Civil War broke out in Spain that his abasement became complete.

Ehrenburg went to Spain as a correspondent for *Izvestia*. He arrived in Madrid at the time when numerous groups of GPU killers were "liquidating" socialist leaders one by one—the Spanish socialist Andrés Nin, the Austrian socialist Kurt Landau, the young Russian-Jewish socialist Marc Rein, and many others. Under pressure from the Soviet government, the members of the POUM, a semi-Trotskyist Spanish revolutionary party, were then put on trial in Barcelona on trumped-up charges. It was the first attempt to transplant the Moscow trials to European soil. Ehrenburg's task was to report to the readers of *Izvestia* that all the Spanish anti-Stalinists were Trotskyist wreckers, agents of Hitler and Franco, etc. He did the job thoroughly and his articles were immediately translated and published in the Stalinist press all over the world. But an artist does not give up his integrity with impunity: the novels Ehrenburg wrote in Paris after returning from Spain were so bad that they seem written by someone else. The protagonists are still Communists, but these Communists are now only automatons. The author winds them up and makes them utter trite phrases, lifted from the editorials of the Soviet press. They are the new Soviet men, who have no doubts about anything. The few who do have doubts usually commit suicide; doubt is the new kind of failure. In *The Second Day*, a young Russian workman kills himself because he cannot be a hundred per cent Stalinist. In another novel, an enemy of the Communists hangs

himself in a Paris hotel upon his return from the Soviet Union. In a later novel, *The Fall of Paris*, written some time after his return to Moscow, Ehrenburg tries to prove that the Communists were the only ones in France who really fought the Nazis—conveniently forgetting the role they played during the period of the Nazi-Soviet pact.

Ehrenburg left Paris for Moscow in 1940, mainly and perhaps solely because he feared that the Germans, after taking Paris, would kill him for being a Jew. The Soviet leaders, possibly aware of this, treated him rather coldly until Hitler invaded Russia in 1941 and the Nazi-Soviet pact ended. Ehrenburg was then made a member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. (Two members of this committee, the Polish-Jewish socialists Erlich and Alter, were shot in Russia as—Hitler's agents.) As a member of that committee, Ehrenburg appeared at meetings and directed appeals to Jews abroad. But he once made a very serious slip: in a speech he revealed that Jewish soldiers at the front frequently received letters from their families which filled them with anxiety, because the letters spoke of a spreading wave of anti-Semitism. Ehrenburg's speech appeared in a Jewish newspaper, published in Moscow. After that nothing more was heard about his political activities.

He returned to journalism and soon became the best and the most famous Soviet newspaperman, a sort of Ernie Pyle. He was so popular with the Soviet army during the war that special orders were issued forbidding soldiers to use his printed articles as emergency cigarette paper. Not even Stalin can boast of such an honor.

Ehrenburg was certainly sincere when he wrote his attacks on the Germans, whom he always hated fiercely. Some of his liveliest journalism was created out of this hatred. But when Soviet policy toward Germany changed after the formation of the "Free German" Committee of Generals von Paulus and von Seydlitz, Ehrenburg was among the first victims of the shift: G. W. Alexandrov, Head of the Propaganda Division



of the party, severely criticized Ehrenburg in *Pravda* for his anti-German attitude. The general tone of Aleksandrov's article indicated that the Russian bureaucrats—who are always willing to use people like Ehrenburg when they need them—did not trust him at all. Perhaps that is why Ehrenburg, in spite of his great literary past, is not even a member of the Board of the Soviet Writers Union, which is headed by one A. Fadeiev, a man who has no literary past worth mentioning.

THE difference between Soviet writers and Communist writers abroad is that the former know very well what is going on at present in Russia, while the latter are sometimes able to keep themselves in a state of relative innocence, especially if they do not actually become party functionaries. Thus Louis Aragon, in Paris, can still write novels of some quality, and Howard Fast, in New York, by confining his attention to the American past, can continue to function as a writer of second-rate popular novels, with every apparent sign that he "believes" in what he is doing. But neither Ehrenburg nor any other Soviet writer can write honest works of fiction in present-day Russia, unless he is heroic enough to risk the fate of Pilniak, Zoschenko, or Anna Ahmatov. This is why Russian novelists—and there still are many excellent novelists in the Soviet Union—simply do not publish anything at all. Some of them have remained silent for as long as five, eight, or even ten years.

But the journalist is in a somewhat different position. You don't write newspaper articles with your soul. You can achieve a high degree of technical brilliance in journalism without bothering too much about such things as truth or your own conscience. There are enough examples all over the world to prove this. Ehrenburg is one of them. He was in the United States in 1946, and after his return to Russia he published six long articles in *Izvestia* about the United States. Here are some passages from these articles:

... An American journalist was indig-

nant that the Yugoslav government deprived about 200,000 people, who helped the Germans, of the right to vote. But the same journalist thought it quite natural that millions of American Negroes are not allowed to vote. I would like to ask a question of my American readers: which is worse—to deprive people with black consciences of the right to vote or people with black skins? . . .

"An industrialist, who is a bitter enemy of the Soviet Union, told me: 'It is not the foreign policy of the Soviet Union which threatens us; it is its future. We don't want you to raise the standard of living too high.'—Yes, the Americans who lead the anti-Soviet campaign are fighting against our saucepans, against Soviet agricultural products, against Soviet prosperity. . . .

"I frequently heard talk about the Iron Curtain which is supposed to fence off the Soviet Union from the rest of the world. This Curtain is being manufactured in America, in the editorial offices of American papers, in the radio broadcasting stations and in the offices of film producers. . . . Do the Americans really know what is going on in Iran, Germany, or Bulgaria? . . . The papers, controlled by the trusts or by individual magnates of the printed word, misinform the readers under the pretext of informing them."

Ehrenburg, of course, knows only too well that the Yugoslav puppet government deprived of the right to vote not 200,000 people, but the entire population of the country, since only one ticket, the Communist one, was put on the ballot. The comparison of black skins to black consciences is nevertheless a good journalistic trick. So is the statement attributed to the "American industrialist," because it implies that America envies Russia's economic "successes" and therefore wants to fight her.

During the war, shortly before the German collapse, Ehrenburg wrote in one of his articles that Germany resembled a forest in autumn: there were still some leaves on the trees, but every day more and more of them fell to the ground.

One remembers this metaphor when reading Ehrenburg's recent articles. There are still some leaves left on Ehrenburg's pen, but they wither and fall off one by one.

**I**LYA EHRENBURG is now living in Moscow in one of the most luxurious apartments in the city. He is a rich man, and on state occasions he can cover his chest with two rows of decorations. When he was in New York in 1946, he told a reporter that almost everything in American stores was junk, but that he would buy a few things for his two dogs. He apparently meant that everything was better in Moscow than in New York.

Notwithstanding all that, one suspects that he is not a happy man. He is very ambitious, and his greatest ambition has always been to be a great novelist. During his last stay in New York he ran into one of the friends of his Paris days. The friend pretended not to see Ehrenburg. Irritated, Ehrenburg went up to him and asked whether he didn't know him. "Of course I know you," the friend answered. "You are Ilya Ehrenburg, the former writer."

Ehrenburg didn't say anything then, but he later told some of his friends that this hurt him more deeply than anything else that had ever happened in his whole life.

## PLACE ME IN THE BREACH

YEHUDA KARNI

PLACE me in the breach with every other  
stone,  
And pound me in;  
Perhaps I shall then appease my motherland,  
And the guilt of a people which did not  
Reclaim its ruins will be absolved.

How good it would be to know  
That I am one with the stones of Jerusalem,  
That my bones are mixed with her wall—  
How glorious!  
Why should my body be less favored than  
my soul  
Which went mute or wailing with its people  
Through fire and water?

Take me with the stones of Jerusalem  
And set me in the wall—  
Mortar me in!  
Then from the wall shall my failing bones  
sing  
And greet the Messiah. . . .

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YEHUDA KARNI (Vlovelsky), poet and journalist, was born in Pinsk in 1884. Since 1921, he has been living in Tel Aviv, where he is assistant editor of the newspaper, *Ha-aretz*. He received the Bialik prize for his book, *Jerusalem*. The above poem has been translated from the Hebrew by M. T. GALPERT.

## ECONOMIC PLANNING WITHOUT STATISM

### *Planning in the Framework of Liberty*

LEWIS COREY

THE crisis of the individual arises out of the crisis of liberal democracy, a form of society built on the recognition of man's right to liberty, personal identity, and moral responsibility. This crisis, in turn, is part of the crisis of a changing social order whose drives may lead to greater liberty, or to an absolute state whose power-needs destroy liberty.

True, liberal democracy has not fully promoted libertarian values, and that is one cause of the crisis. But this is also true: it provides the freedoms and mechanisms that can be used to rid itself of injustices and correct maladjustments.

To live and grow, however, liberal democracy must overcome four dangers. It can overcome them, it is my conviction, only if social change is directed into new libertarian channels.

One danger comes from the diehards of capitalist "economic individualism." Undoubtedly, capitalism, for a moment in his-

torical time, promoted the procedures and values of liberal democracy. The promotion was incomplete, however. And most of the economic individualism of an earlier laissez-faire capitalism is now replaced by a monopoly capitalism that limits or destroys economic freedom as well as human liberty. The diehards' fight to save any and all capitalist economic institutions stands athwart progressive social change. Yet without such change totalitarian reaction and the destruction of all liberties are likely.

A second danger comes from fascism. Fascism is spawned by a liberal democracy not wholly clean of feudal survivals, racial discrimination, and hatreds, and by monopoly reaction against liberty—in brief, by a liberal democracy that has not mastered social change for progressive values. Fascism represents a *frustration* of progressive social change. It is total negation of individual liberty, dignity, and self-development. Fascism is barbarism in scientific technological modern dress.

Communism, a third threat, also destroys liberty and degrades the individual, but through a *perversion* of progressive social change. It arose out of an earlier socialism that throbbed with passion for greater social justice and liberty. But Communism sets up a state that is a totalitarian master, with institutional arrangements that, like those of fascism, suppress the liberal-democratic rights of individuals, including individual workers. It is a society in which the people move and have their being exclusively in the state.

A final, more subtle danger, is the drift of an increasing number of "liberals" toward totalitarian ideas. These liberals, in their rejection of free enterprise, also reject, or at least belittle, the libertarian values identi-

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MANY thoughtful people see the central political problem of our time as that of achieving economic security without thereby sacrificing the values of the liberal tradition. LEWIS COREY, who here seeks to study the institutional background necessary for the synthesis of security and freedom, is one of America's outstanding liberal economists. He is Associate Professor of Economics at Antioch College and a member of the editorial board of the *Antioch Review*. He was born in 1894 and has been on the staff of the Institute of Economics and assistant editor of the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*. He has contributed to the *Nation*, *New Republic*, and other periodicals, and is the author of the following books: *The House of Morgan* (1930), *Decline of American Capitalism* (1934), *Crisis of the Middle Class* (1935), *The Unfinished Task* (1942). This is the fourteenth article in the series, "The Crisis of the Individual."

fied with free enterprise. They blind themselves to the fact that these values are an enduring contribution to civilization that goes beyond particular forms of economic enterprise. The totalitarian liberals (some are undercover Communists, many more are fellow travelers) think and act as if the final answer to all problems of social change is a constant enlargement of state power. They increase the danger of submergence of the individual in an all-inclusive statism.

Is survival of liberty and the individual—their further development through greater economic, social-political, and cultural freedom—a lost cause? It is not, *providing* we muster every resource of intelligence and social action to master the crisis of social change for libertarian values, to work out new institutional arrangements within which all institutions, including the state, will recognize and expand the rights of man in greater social-economic and cultural fulfillment.

**T**HE double-talk from "Right" and "Left" has frightfully distorted the meaning of liberal democracy, especially its relation to capitalism. It is noteworthy that both die-hard capitalist apologists and the Communists agree on limiting what capitalism means to "economic individualism and private profit." To be sure, capitalism brought liberal democracy into being, but the relation is historical, conditional, and relative. We need to reject the either-or absolutes of "Right" and "Left." Liberals must break down today's problem into these specific questions: What particular institutions within capitalism promote liberal democracy? What old institutions must go? What new institutions must replace them to sustain liberal democracy against attacks and further promote its values?

There are five chief factors which shaped the progress and limitations of the concepts and practice of liberal-democratic individualism.

(1) Revolution against feudalism began with the revival of trade and the emergence of a merchant class. One ideological mani-

festation was a demand for recognition of "the rights of property." Since feudal lords in their persons combined absolute economic and political power, this was a revolutionary demand. Once won, the rights of property became the rights of such individuals as owned property, and these limited arbitrary power. A new unlimited state power arose, however, in the absolute monarchy (supported by the big bourgeois merchants) that began state monopoly, restrictions, and controls on economic activity. Free enterprise and the laissez-faire state did not emerge fully (and then only in the countries of Northwestern Europe and North America) until after the democratic revolutions abolished the absolute monarchy and set limits on the state power. Free enterprise did not mean profit-making only; it was a concept of economic self-reliance to liberate men from state tyranny. It meant free men in the midst of economic and political freedom (including free labor), broadening into cultural freedom.

(2) The merchant class early became identified with religious heresy. The new economic interests and ideas clashed with a feudalism whose binding ideological element was Roman ecclesiasticism. The economic and political revolution moved into religion. Protestant stress on individual conscience and individual worth was used by "Left" heretics, from the Hussites to the Puritans and Diggers, to drive in a social-democratic direction. If men are precious and equal in the sight of God, why, they asked, should not men be precious and equal in the sight of man? To be sure, in its extreme forms, one aspect of Protestantism—the emphasis on individual conscience and direct responsibility to God—became anti-social, providing the justification of an unbridled economic individualism that denied the brotherhood of men. But "Left" heretics repudiated this atomized individualism. They insisted that in early Christian teachings the individual is not an isolated exploiting or to-be-exploited thing, but a social individual whose self-realization comes through service to his brethren and through living



that fulfills the independence, dignity, and worth of every human being.

(3) Emerging science also strengthened the revolt against authority and provided new technological weapons for economic progress. The scientific revolution of the 16th-17th centuries was a product of capitalism's liberation of the individual from medieval restraints and taboos. In turn, science shattered the old world of faith and dogma; it broke down absolutes, strengthened the rational approach through emphasis on knowledge for doing, manipulation, and control. In their struggle with the church, scientists developed a supreme individualism which learned to ignore all arguments of authority as to the "dangerous" social effects of their discoveries.\* In the intellectual revolution that followed, science opened up new worlds of experience and knowledge. The breakdown of old beliefs stimulated individual self-expression and autonomy, which spread, unevenly, through the intellectuals and artists, to all spheres of human activity.

(4) In its early stages, capitalist society virtually excluded the workers from its values: the change from serfdom to "free labor" was left-handed progress. Under an oligarchical liberal government, workers had no political rights. Under the factory system, the worker had no economic rights except to quit work (an empty right, in many respects, but one from which labor developed the strike weapon). In time free workers answered with labor unionism, an invention of the workers themselves, not of middle-class intellectuals. Liberalism had justified individual property ownership as sustaining independence and liberty. The workers' alienation from property thus excluded them from independence and liberty.

\* This historical fact combined with later capitalist disdain for "pure science" to develop an indifference among scientists to the social consequences of their work. But, I may add, the primary trouble is not with natural scientists who are not "social-minded," but with social scientists, who fail to keep social thinking and institutional readjustment in balance with scientific, technological advance.

Workers now used liberal "freedom of association" to associate themselves in unions. This was not only an assertion of economic needs, it represented a demand for the right to self-government and human dignity. Along with the economic struggle, unions became active in the democratic struggle to give the people equal political rights. They brought constitutional democracy to industry through collective bargaining. Labor unions must be credited with a basic contribution to expanding liberal democracy.

(5) The emergence of the liberal democratic state sums up and intertwines all the other factors. Liberty in the modern world began with the limitation or destruction of medieval statism (lay and clerical), which had centered all economic and political power in the lord and subordinated all individuals to one individual. The alliance of the merchant class with monarchical absolutism was in turn overthrown by a revolt of the lower-middle class of small enterprisers and professional people in alliance with peasants and workers against economic and political monopoly. The limited-power state that arose after the democratic revolutions, while it enlarged the areas of freedom, was a "liberal oligarchical" state that denied to propertyless persons the right to vote. But later, with the rise of labor, the liberal democratic state came into being.

Individualism was thus the product of a series of interacting institutional, intellectual, and moral changes. It was nourished by economic, political, and cultural *diversity and autonomy*, by a *pluralism* in social institutions and spheres of activity which enabled the individual to have a large degree of freedom of choice and action within capitalism. It is this diversity and autonomy, this pluralism, that must be retained in newer forms if we want social change to promote libertarian values.

IT is important, at this point, to note the differences between liberalism and democracy, the two elements which were synthesized in the liberal-democratic state.

The philosophy of liberalism emphasizes

the individual's liberty and rights under a government that governs least. But liberal practice, because of unequal distribution of economic and political power, gave particular social groups, classes, and individuals the liberty to promote their interests against that of the mass of the people. Earlier liberals, as a matter of fact, were anti-democratic: the liberal Voltaire opposed a republic in favor of constitutional monarchy on the oligarchical British model. Separation of economic from political power broke the political absolutism of feudalism and brought liberty. But it also brought a private economic absolutism through unrestricted liberty of capitalist property. The theory that "that state is best which governs least" became, in practice, the right of an economic oligarchy to govern most.

Against liberalism, the philosophy and practice of democracy emphasized the majority, the people, equality.

Democracy wanted equal political rights through universal suffrage. It wanted, in addition, a measure of economic equality as the basis of political equality and freedom. Liberalism considered ownership of property as necessary for liberty. So lower middle-class democrats (Jacobins, Jefferson, Jackson) started to use the state to end, or at least to limit, the unequal distribution of property. The propertyless people could limit the economic oligarchy's power only through organization (e.g., labor unions) and, above all, by use of a superior power, *the state power*. Democracy pressed for a state that governs more.

State power also grew with the consolidation of nationalism. Liberal philosophers of the Enlightenment were cosmopolitan in their world-view; the democrats were nationalist. Nationalism was part of the popular democratic revolutions, and its first complete expression appeared in the Jacobin phase of the French Revolution. Later movements for national independence identified nationalism with democracy. Then revolutionary democratic nationalism was transformed into capitalist economic nationalism. Together with imperialism it

strengthened state power and intolerance (including people's racial intolerance for other people). Wars further increased this trend. The final misuse of nationalism was its distortion into totalitarian nationalist imperialism.

Democratic emphasis on the majority, the nation, and the state develops a totalitarian potential. The danger of statism arises as majorities, the nation, and state become impatient of the liberal doctrine of inalienable rights, and as the state's powers are enlarged because of its intervention in economic activity.

A totalitarian potential is apparent early in the philosophy of democracy. The democratic state, Rousseau argued in his democratic creed, is "composed of all citizens" and expresses their "general will." Hence this state "can have no interests contrary to the interests of any citizen" and so "*it need give no guarantees to its citizens.*" The "general will" as expressed in the state thus becomes an absolute imperative for everyone, alike for majority and minority, "whoever goes against the general will can be constrained by the whole body." There is no room or need for inalienable rights in Rousseau's state, since that state *necessarily* expresses what is good for the people.

In contrast to this, the *liberal-democratic* state—first formulated by the Levellers (left-wing of the Puritan revolution) and by Locke, and developed primarily in North-western Europe, the British Commonwealth, and the United States—attempts the synthesis of liberalism and democracy.

Liberal-democratic government is popular, constitutional, representative government with limited powers, in which liberalism and democracy check and balance one another. The doctrinaire radical argument that the checks-and-balances of the American constitution were intended to thwart the people's will is only partly true. Some of the Constitutional fathers distrusted the people, but all of them distrusted state authority and wanted check-and-balances to prevent tyrannical centralization of political power. And today, for all those who want

freedom, not totalitarian dictatorship, a decisive problem of social change remains the problem of how to use checks-and-balances under new conditions to limit state power.

It is the central task of the liberal-democratic state to balance and reconcile the rights and needs of the individual with those of the group, of society. The majority governs, but it must accept definite individual and minority rights as inalienable. A majority may want anti-Semitism and Jim Crowism, for example, but majority will cannot make them right or legal, since they infringe inalienable rights. The majority governs, but the minority can criticize and oppose, organize to change majority decisions, government policy, or government itself. So liberalism and democracy, the individual and the people, minority and majority check and balance one another. The idea of inalienable rights is crucial. They arise not out of "natural law," but out of the experience that there can be no individual liberty and dignity without a recognition of rights that no majority or state can violate.

**I**F LIBERAL democracy never worked fully, it is not because of inherent defects, but because of the nature and limitations of *property relations* in its midst.

The liberals saw in ownership of property the foundation of liberty. Since the majority of the people was propertyless, early democrats urged widespread ownership of small independent property as the *economic foundation of democracy and freedom*. It was a functional conception of property: "What I work I own and what I own I work." The America of the 1820's was measurably a liberal economic democracy: about 80 per cent of Americans (excluding the slave South) owned small independent property and so depended on no one for the right to work and live. All this was swept away by the surging tide of industrialism, of large-scale industry and monopoly. Today, upwards of 80 percent of the American people own no productive property—and depend on a wage-or-salary job for the right to work and live.

The liberty-giving quality of property is negated by monopoly; and monopoly property becomes, over large areas of our economy, an anti-liberal parasitism of oligarchical absentee ownership.

Much of recent American political history is the story of efforts by small businessmen, the farmers, and propertyless people to use political power to limit or destroy monopoly by government regulation and control. But monopoly has kept on growing. As it grows it calls forth more government regulation and control, with more regimentation. In turn, unbridled economic individualism of monopoly, operating as an oligarchical power complex, using "free enterprise" ideology to mask its destruction or frustration of truly free enterprise as economic and human freedom, marshals every reactionary weapon of monopoly capitalism to resist "government encroachment"—and we have, as a result, the deadlock which has become the universal crisis of our time.

This deadlock brings economic breakdown. In turn, the breakdown compels government to "plan," spend, and tax in order to make the economic system work (while die-hards of "liberal" economics yell about "restoration of the free market's automatic working and controls"). As government increasingly intervenes in economic activity the state that governed least becomes a state that governs more and more. But more government, using an endless succession of controls that do not work within monopoly capitalism, fails to end the economic crisis and drifts toward statism.

It is at this point that the crisis of capitalism becomes acute. If progressive social change is frustrated and helpless, the path is open for totalitarians of the "Right" or "Left" to break the deadlock—by seizing power to implement reactionary social change. Property rights disappear, and so do the rights of man. Under Communism *all* property is nationalized; under fascism it may survive, temporarily, to become merely the right to levy tribute on production and income.

Thus property, as it becomes monopoly,

reacts against its earlier liberating function. And this reactionary trend is also fed, in varying degrees, by the other forces that originally promoted liberal democracy and individualism.

RELIGION, once liberating, becomes increasingly institutional and a conservative force. Lutheranism conditions believers to a blind acceptance of state authority: man is sinful, hence *any* state, since it is made up of sinful men, is necessarily bad, but its authority must be accepted or society breaks apart. You may pray that the sinful men-of-state may behave better, but you cannot oppose them; only if the state interferes with man's personal relation with God can it be opposed on *that issue* (e.g., Pastor Niemöller, who fought the Nazi state only on the religious issue). In America, Protestant sects have multiplied and become ingrown, while American "fundamentalism" has become increasingly amenable to exploitation by crackpot fascist groups. As the crisis grows acute, the Catholic hierarchy undermines progressive social action with its overemphasis on the exclusive importance of the individual's direct relation with God, and with its atavistic yearning for political power. Recent returns to religion as a force outside life strengthens the escapist effort to solve the problems of society in other than social terms. (On the other hand, Catholics, and other truly religious people, so long as they keep fresh their faith in the preciousness of the individual, may prove valuable allies in infusing social change with libertarian moral values.) The answer to religious escapism is not philosophical but social: a desirable social change that ends the immoral torture of helpless human beings and realizes the moral unity of mankind.

Similarly, some of the social consequences of science, and some scientists themselves, strengthen the trend away from liberal individualism. The wonders and terrors of science are beyond the understanding of ordinary people, who are made to feel insignificant and helpless. Moreover, too many "social-minded" scientists are totalitarian,

looking upon human society as a laboratory and upon human beings as guinea pigs. The scientist-barbarians of fascism are a terrifying omen. On the "Left" too there are omens. A British scientist, C. H. Waddington, one of a small group, in the name of "Marxism" which he misunderstands and distorts, calls for a new "*centralized and totalitarian*" economic system that "perhaps" (only perhaps!) may "combine totalitarianism with freedom of thought." In France a group of Communist scientists (among them Joliot-Curie) is merging science with totalitarianism under the name of "scientism" to "reinterpret" all values. Forgetting that not science, but man in history (which includes science) is the source of all values, they convert science into an absolute that merges with and sustains the absolute Communist state. This danger is strengthened by the belief in "scientific-technological determinism," which argues that science can solve all problems and that "values come from technology; building machines to build more machines comprises all that is worthwhile in human activity." These ideas fit easily into anti-liberal, anti-human totalitarianism.

Out of the limitations of individualism came forces and ideas that react against liberty. Much of the criticism of liberal or "bourgeois" individualism was reactionary, from the feudal-aristocratic criticism of Carlyle to the totalitarian criticism of today. Yet liberal individualism was beset with grave evils. Unrestricted "economic individualism" gave rise to profit-individualists who trampled upon individual human rights. The limitations and frustrations of liberal individualism produced many rootless, disintegrated personalities whose individualism degenerated into atomism. Atomistic individualism became a revolt against the individual human being himself. The work of several generations of artists and writers debased the individual until he is no longer a recognizable human being. This was not only an escape from the social relations of human living but an escape from *the task of reshaping those relations* for a freer, more noble individualism. These perversions of



individualism gave rise to the "superman" of Nietzsche, the "new Caesarism" of Rodbertus, and the "revolutionary elites" of Sorel, who exult in violence: they all made their contribution to the totalitarian challenge of today.

At the same time a "democratic individualism" was growing up, which gave the masses of the people increasing self-expression through increasing economic means, political liberty, and leisure. This was largely the work of labor unions. But within democratic individualism is latent the danger of a "mass mind" that may become majority intolerance of individual and minority rights. Moreover, while unions realize and invigorate the rights of workers in relation to their employers, in too many cases workers have few rights in relation to their bureaucratic union leaders. I am not speaking of the tiny minority of racketeering unions; they are *sui generis*. A problem of freedom arises in all unions as they grow bigger and more powerful, with proliferating functions and bureaucratic centralization of power. It is this centralization that small Communist groups exploit to get control of free unions and transform them into useful party-state unions that are a support of totalitarian tyranny.

ALL these specific dangers and limitations are serious; added together, they bulk very large. They give arguments and opportunity to sinister forces, individuals, and ideas—"Right" and "Left"—as old institutions and values crumble, and so long as progressive social change is frustrated. Desperation in the wake of pathological social conditions gives an opportunity for expression to "irrational and destructive potentials buried deep in the human psyche." But these irrational and destructive potentials burst forth only if liberal democracy fails to realize that present failures arise from its failure to transform gradual social changes into a new liberal synthesis through specific social changes.

The error of too many "radicals" is to lump together everything "bourgeois" as bad

and reject it. On the contrary, there are libertarian moral values in liberal democratic or "bourgeois" society that must be cherished and strengthened, values that mankind has slowly, agonizingly developed since the Renaissance. The attack on these values themselves as "bourgeois" encourages reaction. From this angle we now see that fascism was more than a reactionary frustration of progressive social change; it is a deep-going revolt against all the liberal-democratic values whose realization today is incomplete, but whose promise is great. Fascism is the first revolution in history that appeals to all that is ignoble and vile in man and erects this into a state system. The pathology of its power-individualism is fascism's most horrible and revealing aspect.

INDIVIDUALISM is on the defensive, while the material means and the ideas for a finer, more broadly available individual life, beyond anything that men have imagined till now, continue to grow. But if we are to use our productive potential for the benefit of all men, we must first institute changes in economic policy and relationships within liberal democracy. Its property relations no longer sustain or promote (they never fully did) the values of individual liberty; moreover, our economic system is subject to severe and constant breakdown.

Even John Stuart Mill, the great 19th-century liberal, saw that private property relations could not be made an absolute. "I saw private property as the last word of legislation in my earlier years," Mill wrote in his *Autobiography*. But later his "ideal of improvement would classify us decidedly under the general designation of socialists." Mill goes on: "While we repudiated with the greatest energy that tyranny of society which most socialistic systems are supposed to involve, we looked forward to a time when . . . the division of the produce of labor will be made in concert on an acknowledged principle of justice. . . . The social problem of the future we considered to be, *how to unite the greatest individual liberty of action with a common ownership in the*

*raw material of the globe*, and an equal participation of all in the benefits of combined labor."

Mill's acceptance of socialism was a thorn in the side of liberal laissez-faire individualists; they ignored him. But Marxists ignored him, too, for his socialism was libertarian and individualistic. (Marxists also ignored Mill's prophetic warning that "*a yoke of uniformity in opinion and practice*" might be imposed on society as "some particular doctrine in time rallies the majority around it, and organizes social institutions comparable to itself.")

Marx has been proved correct in his major criticism of capitalism: that the dynamics of capitalist production drive toward an economic breakdown that makes new economic institutions inescapable. He advocated state ownership of *all* means of production and distribution in order to realize a society where "free development of the individual is the condition for the free development of all individuals." Lenin agreed; but the Marx-Lenin revolution assumed institutional forms *against* liberty and individual identity. Russian Communism has proved that unlimited state ownership under a dictatorship results in the totalitarian submergence of the individual.

Part of the reason for the failure of the greatest social movement of the past seventy-five years is apparent in the insufficient stress on liberal democratic and moral values. Of this shortcoming Ignazio Silone wrote in 1942: "Many Marxists have shown a sort of contempt for the inner life. Their ideal, as stressed in the novels of Malraux and Hemingway, is the man of steel, the man of action who never hesitates and has no scruples. This conception derives from Nietzsche, and it has lately been expressed much more compellingly by certain fascist writers. . . . Many Communist bureaucrats, who have lost their faith in the always changing party line, as a result of their spiritual self-mutilation can never return to normal humanity. . . . After being a doctrine Marxism has become a sort of drug, a sedative, a sop to one's conscience. Perhaps

some day we shall reach the formula: 'Marxism is the opium of the people.' Socialism, however, will outlive Marxism. Today the problem before us is, What sort of Socialism? . . . I stand for (1) an integral federalism and (2) for an ethical conception of socialism . . . which does not demand a new morality or a new justification for socialism. . . . Human liberty and human dignity are conceptions that will never perish."

Silone is right. While the earlier Marxist movement did, in large measure, emphasize liberal-democratic and ethical values, it fell (in its Communist variant) into the trap of using means that perverted or destroyed the very ends it sought.

THE Marxist was caught in the pitfall of Utopian belief. Man was by nature good; the wrong institutions of private property and class rule alone made him evil. Eliminate capitalist property and rule, the last evil institutions, and man *will* be good. The consequences of the belief were disastrous. Socialism tended to slight moral values and concentrate on institutional change.

At least as important, however, as the conflict between moral ends and means is the conflict between *institutional* ends and means. Marxism proposed institutional means which, in the language of dialectics, turn into their opposite. Marxism insisted on the proletariat as the exclusive carrier of socialism and on absolute collectivism as the foundation of socialism. Exclusive emphasis on the proletariat necessarily alienated productive non-proletarian groups or classes from socialism. This meant that orthodox Marxist parties never could secure an overwhelming electoral majority to introduce socialism by peaceful democratic means. Hence the practical necessity of the Communist resort to minority violence and dictatorship. The dictatorship becomes a new unlimited power-state whose absolute economic collectivism supports absolute state power and engulfs the individual as economic, cultural, and moral being in an all-inclusive collective despotism.

While Marxists minimized Mill's liber-

tarian humanism, the liberals overlooked his plea for a new economic foundation for liberty. Fascism caught them, as it caught the Marxists, unaware. And as liberals today face the pressure for economic reconstruction they may succumb—some already have—to “liberal” totalitarian means and ideas that emphasize the state.

Earlier liberals had a magnificent faith in the capacity of free men to use liberty and intelligence to solve social problems. Today's totalitarian “liberals,” apostates from freedom, mired in power-and-elite realism, totally without faith in the “common man” they orally exalt, and in befuddled fear of mankind's irrationality (they, of course, are always rational), have but one answer to every problem: let the state do it! In discussion with totalitarian liberals I find a frightening contemptuous ignorance or disregard of liberalism's achievements and potential. They sneer at American democracy for its imperfections, while they praise Russian Communism for the imaginary perfections it *may* bring.

We have learned that dictatorship of the proletariat, while it claims to be “temporary,” becomes institutional and permanent as it destroys liberal democracy. The state bureaucracy builds and lives by force, becomes a new ruling class through absolute *political* control of all economic power, and inevitably must depend on force to keep the absolute state going. Indeed, absolute collectivism (even without dictatorship, though with quicker finality under dictatorship), recombining as it does *all* economic and political power in the state, must impair, if not destroy, freedom. For by its regimental all-collective uniformity it destroys the diversity and pluralism necessary to nourish liberty of individual and group action.

**A** LARGE measure of nationalization (or socialization) of industry and of economic planning is inescapable. Recent history shows all nations, regardless of ideology, moving in that direction. But evidence grows that complete nationalization, over-all planning, and the totalitarian state inevi-

tably feed one into the other, at the cost of all individual values.

Hence the basic principles of economic reconstruction must include:

1. The limitation of nationalization, or socialization, to large-scale industry. Socialization of monopoly enterprises, which dominate 70 per cent of American industrial activity, is enough to end the economic crisis and to build a new economic order with a policy of production for human welfare and freedom.

2. In addition to this limitation, socialized industry should be made to assume *functional organizational forms* that promote diversity, self-government, and decentralization within a state that, whatever new economic functions it may acquire, would still remain a limited-power state.

In a highly complex, organized world, organizational forms are important, since—depending on their character—they can support either totalitarianism or freedom. Public enterprises must be prevented from assuming forms that promote absolute centralization of economic power in the state. They can and should be autonomous in organization, operation, and direction, independent of government except for over-all policy. The model is the public corporation of the TVA type, but with greater autonomy and with functional directorates representing management, workers, and consumers. These public corporations or authorities are neither direct state enterprises nor under civil service; they are operated as economic, not political, institutions. They provide the greatest amount of decentralization, with authority distributed on successive functional levels, encouraging employee and community participation and regional self-government, as well as greater efficiency. The public corporations in a particular industry are thus not formed into one “government trust,” easily controlled by the state's top bureaucracy; they are independent and compete with one another within the relations of planning. A national government agency with final control can be set up to crack down on public corporations *if and when*

they violate the mandates under which they operate.

Such organizational forms of public enterprise prevent an absolute centralization of economic power. At the same time they provide diversity and pluralism with their checks-and-balances. Economic freedom is strengthened by retention of free private enterprise in small independent business and in agriculture, and by encouragement of cooperatives.

There is no economic need to socialize small independent business, in which ownership is combined with management; its existence is no bar to planning for economic balance and welfare. This is also true of farmers, all of whom should become free independent farmers under use-ownership, with cooperatives for large-scale farming and for the purchase and sale of commodities and other purposes. Cooperatives, because of their voluntaristic nature and self-government, can be major supports of economic freedom since they are forms of "social enterprise" independent of the state. Free private enterprise and cooperatives alike serve economic freedom by serving as a check-and-balance to public enterprise and the state. They can serve freedom especially in the opinion industries—film, the press, book publishing, radio—where a diversity of enterprise promotes group, minority and individual liberty of ideas, while absolute state control means their limitation or suppression.

**N**ATIONAL economic planning need not be absolute or totalitarian. It can be limited to strategic factors of policy, price-and-profit, over-all investment (not all investment), with supplementary resort to fiscal measures for desirable social-economic objectives. There can be decentralization in planning, too, down to the grass-roots level. Planning can draw John Dewey's important distinction between a *total planned* society and a *continuously planning* society.

The institutional basis of the totalitarian state, whatever its ideology, is a combination of union management, industrial man-

agement, and government management or administration in *one* centralized bureaucratic power that makes the state unopposed and unopposable. Hence free labor unions, as much as a pluralistic economy, are an indispensable element in economic reconstruction for freedom. They act as a major check-and-balance on economic and governmental bureaucracy. Moreover, workers will still need free unions to protect and promote their interests, especially their drive for personal independence and dignity.

Conflicts of group and individual interests will continue to exist; they are part of the diversity of freedom. Only those interest-conflicts that impair or destroy liberal democracy should be abolished. As Horace Fries has suggestively argued, a liberal economic and social democracy will encourage the use of creative intelligence through scientific method to fashion mediation techniques for peaceful, cooperative settlement of conflicts on all levels. Proposals for eternal harmony and final perfection through totalitarian power end up in encouraging brutish imperfection, depending as they do on the intervention of the absolute state dominated by an oligarchy of unlimited power-individualists.

The decisive aspect of the liberal economic democracy or liberal democratic socialism (call it what you will) that I propose is this: It consciously, deliberately *proposes new economic arrangements of a kind calculated to retain and strengthen liberal democracy*. The state must be used to set up the new economic institutions; and these proposed arrangements give government more economic functions than were envisaged in earlier liberal theory. But *the state remains a limited-power state* with all the self-corrective procedures of liberal democracy to promote liberty and security.\*

**L**IBERTY, in the final analysis, is a complex of freedoms that depend on the na-

\* For a more complete discussion of these ideas see Lewis Corey, *The Unfinished Task: Economic Reconstruction for Democracy* (1942), especially chapters 17 and 18.



ture of the state. The politics of liberty are as important as its economics: they are interdependent. One truth must never be forgotten. Absolute state power is the enemy of free moral man. Yet many liberals dismiss this danger as lightly as the Communists do.

One "liberal" political scientist develops a theory of bureaucracy that is a justification of despotic bureaucratic elites. The representative character of bureaucracy, he writes, is necessary for democracy; this "representative" character "must be sought in a common world view [and] in the officials' commitments to the purposes that the state is undertaking to serve. . . . Bureaucracies, to be democratic, must be representative of the groups they serve . . . must mirror the dominant forces in society."\* This is only a conditional limited truth. For in this sense every bureaucracy, except in revolutionary times, is representative. A fascist or Communist bureaucracy is "representative," since it has a "common world view," promotes "the purposes the state is undertaking to serve," and "mirrors the dominant forces in society." Yet these bureaucracies are despotic, for they serve an undemocratic state that forcibly creates the "dominant forces," decides and imposes the "world view" and "purposes."

Another political scientist,† an active "liberal" apologist of Soviet imperialism, has openly avowed totalitarianism: "'Caesarism' is the state form of the future. Caesarism means 'socialism'—that is, *military totalitarianism* resting on a dynamic faith and will to action . . . an economy ruled by a self-

*conscious, respected and purposeful elite.*" (My italics.)

Whatever its class origin or ideology, the unlimited-power state destroys freedom because state and society became identical. Hobbes argued: "The power established to maintain order is sovereign, omnipotent to impose its will . . . doctrines of division of sovereignty, subjection of the sovereign to the laws or restriction by the opinion or conscience of individuals are false." Rousseau's "democratic state" simply puts "the people" in place of "the sovereign," and it, too, gives no guarantees to citizens. Locke, on the contrary, drew a liberating distinction between the state and society. His emphasis was on *liberty in society* alongside of popular sovereignty. Government is *one* institution among many social institutions set up to secure ends that the people want. Liberal democracy imposes restraints upon government to limit its power, otherwise the state becomes identical with society and so destroys the diversity of institutional, individual, and group action without which there is no liberty.

Liberal democracy today needs new economic institutions that go beyond the economics of the early liberals. But the state must remain a limited-power state in a *free pluralistic society*. In the words of Hans Kohn: "The characteristics of the state are enforcement and uniformity; the characteristics of society are voluntary cooperation and variety."

Statism submerges the individual and is the mortal enemy of man. Beneath all institutions there is man, the individual. What counts in man is independence, self-reliance, and initiative: his human sympathy, moral responsibility, and decency—his integrity. These values can flourish only as the freedoms flourish.

\* J. Donald Kingsley, *Representative Bureaucracy* (1944), pp. 274, 282-3, 305.

† Frederick L. Schumann in the discussion, "Who Owns the Future," the *Nation*, January 11, 1941, pp. 36-38; January 25, 1941, p. 111.

## SABRA

### A Story

IRENE ORGEL

**A**RYEH is a *sabra*. A *sabra* is a species of cactus indigenous to the hot dry soil of Palestine; and *sabra* is the name for one of those rare Jews (there aren't so many of them yet) who have been lucky enough to be born in the Land of Israel.

Aryeh plays the violin with the Palestine Symphony Orchestra, and he was born in Rosh Pinnah. That is why, when he took us sightseeing, it was with all the fierce pride of a native son. Personally, I thought he was going a bit too far when he insisted that we trudge up a particularly steep hill, on a particularly hot afternoon, to look at a house that wasn't particularly interesting or particularly old.

As we had already seen Rachel's tomb and the tower of David, not to mention the pyramids, all within the space of one week, we were hardly likely to be impressed with a house that did not look more than fifty years old, though it was very dilapidated, with wooden doors rotting on their hinges. Aryeh kept asking us whether we noticed anything extraordinary about the house, and we answered rather crossly that we did not, unless he meant that the architecture was quite comical, being a hodge-podge of every possible style of architecture in the world.

"That isn't what I meant," said Aryeh, sounding very much put out. And as we

took a breather under some fine old cypresses which lined the dusty terrace, he said, "Obviously I shall have to tell you the story of the builder of this house and of the people who lived in it. . . .

**T**HE man who built this house," he said, "was called Reb Lemuel, and he came from a small village in the Carpathian mountains where his father was a *wunder-rebbe*. 'A *wunder-rebbe*,' explained Aryeh, "is a rabbi who can work miracles. I have been told that the house of Reb Lemuel's father was full of crutches left there by the sick who came haltingly to the rabbi, and left there completely healed; but this I cannot vouch for. I can tell you, though, that Reb Lemuel was not a rabbi; he was a common artisan, a builder, who worked with his hands. An elder brother of his inherited the book-learning of the old rabbi, and yet, strangely enough, it was Reb Lemuel who, in his own way, worked miracles.

"Reb Lemuel had a beard as bright as fire. When I knew him in his old age, this beard was white and insubstantial as a wisp of smoke, but in 1875 it was red and silky, a perfect match I imagine for the mink fur which went around the top of his *shtreiml*. For I must explain that Reb Lemuel continued to wear, beside the shores of the Mediterranean, the fur-trimmed hat that had kept the snowflakes off his ears in Russia. I used to see him wearing it when he watched the furnace of the brick foundry he established later on, and in his old age I often saw him walking through the streets of Jerusalem during some of our worst *khamins*, still with his fur hat on his brow, and the sweat streaming unchecked down his face.

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IRENE ORGEL was born in England in 1922, traveled in Palestine in 1937-38, and came to this country in 1939. She received a B.A. degree from the University of California in 1942, and is now doing graduate work in comparative literature at Columbia University. She has written scripts for the Columbia Broadcasting System, done research for the British Information Services, and published poetry in the *American Scholar*.

"Reb Lemuel first saw the Holy Land at sunrise, when he stood in the prow of a ship which was sailing due east. The soft hills of Palestine confronted him, black, and outlined with fire against the glorious sky. The water he sailed on was golden, and the seagulls caught the sunrise colors on their wings. Reb Lemuel's beard glowed and his lips moved as he said, 'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who has preserved us and kept us in life until this day.'"

"How do you know what he said?" objected one of the more sceptical among our sightseers.

"I know this is what he said," explained Aryeh indulgently, "because it is the traditional blessing to be recited on seeing our land for the first time. What else would you have Reb Lemuel say? In the same way, I know that as soon as he came ashore, he knelt to kiss the earth. No, as a matter of fact he did not kneel. He prostrated himself full length on the ground, and pressed his cheek against the warm soil of his homeland which he had not seen for two thousand years. His younger children clambered out to do the same. His eldest child was a girl called Ziona, named for his dream and the enduring love of his life. She was fifteen at that time, pale with the pallor of the ghetto. Her face was round as the full moon and her eyes were a very pale gray. She wore a golden chain around her neck, and she knelt to pick up some of the red sand and poured it into her bosom. I think she was very beautiful then, for I only knew her when she was much older, and even then she was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen.

"THERE was a Turkish official present at the scene. Of course the immigration was strictly illegal. But this official was not supposed to notice Jews entering the promised land. For a certain amount of *bak-sheesh*, he was engaged in looking the other way. 'These are Jews,' he explained languidly to a subordinate official. 'And they come here to die.' He took hold of the bundle Reb Lemuel carried and roughly

examined its contents. First he pulled out the long phylacteries which he tossed casually aside, for he had seen many before. Then his eyes grew wary. For his hand rested on an object which he had never seen before in any Jew's luggage.

"What's this?" he demanded sharply of Reb Lemuel in Yiddish.

"A trowel," whispered Reb Lemuel. He was always tongue-tied in front of strangers, and in the presence of a non-Jew all the fire died within him.

"I can see that," sneered the Turk. 'But what do you want it for?'

"I have come here to build," said Reb Lemuel defiantly. This was in 1875.

"Reb Lemuel and his family rode to Rosh Pinnah in a cart driven by a one-eyed Arab, whose other eye was eaten away with trachoma. They bumped over rough roads and over paths where there were no roads at all, and the children were horribly sick. But Reb Lemuel sat beside the driver and he smiled. For before his eyes, the desert was already blooming like the rose.

"They had nearly reached their destination, and dusk was descending on the lonely land, when the driver suddenly stopped the cart, ordered them out, and started to threaten them in a strange language. Reb Lemuel looked pitifully around him, and instead of seeing a land flowing with milk and honey, for one moment he saw quite clearly the stony mountains and the dry and treeless fields. Then Ziona, the daughter, very quietly and without any fuss, unfastened the golden necklace which she had around her neck and gave it to the driver. After that, they all piled back into the cart and the journey continued.

"When they reached Rosh Pinnah it was already dark, and settlers came with lanterns and showed Reb Lemuel how to drive a pole into the ground and drape a blanket over it to form a tent. For the Turks by their law would not turn off the land anyone who settled there, and a makeshift tent constituted a home. So here the family slept on their first night in the old-new country, and Reb Lemuel lay on his back with his

face outside of the blanket, so that he could see the stars which looked extraordinarily low.

"As soon as there was enough daylight, Reb Lemuel arose to look at the village of Rosh Pinnah. He saw that the people lived in makeshift dwellings built mainly of petrol cans, with rags stuffed in the crevices to keep away the wind. Then he knew that there was a lot of work for him to do, and he was very glad. And there was an immediate celebration when the settlers learned that they had a builder in their midst. For they already had a tailor, a baker, and a winepresser, but they had been waiting for a builder to arrive.

**R**EB LEMUEL set to work immediately and with such energy that, before the arrival of the next rainy season, he had replaced most of the tin shacks with neat brick buildings, primitive, but tight against the rain. But Reb Lemuel had an ambition in his heart that he could not help talking about, and when the people of Rosh Pinnah listened to him it became their ambition too.

"For Reb Lemuel had seen mansions of two, three, or even four stories high in Kiev and Petrograd, and he felt keenly that one-floor buildings were not good enough for the Land of Israel. While he built the flat huts for the first settlers, he waited impatiently for the arrival of a rich Jew who would commission him to build a house with two stories; and the village of Rosh Pinnah waited with him.

"And at last the rich Jew arrived. His name was Ibrahim, and he came to Palestine not from the West, but from the East. He had prayed in a synagogue facing westward towards Zion, just as Reb Lemuel had always turned eastward in his prayers. He came to Palestine with camels and horses, with two wives, and with a daughter, they say, who danced exquisitely in sandals set with emeralds. He also had a son named Daoud, whose face was golden and whose teeth were all gold, and his eyelashes were as long as a camel's.

"Ibrahim selected this site at the top of

a hill overlooking Rosh Pinnah, and he asked Reb Lemuel to build him a house. Reb Lemuel had dreamed so many dreams about the house he was going to build that he knew exactly what it would look like, incorporating the best features of all the houses he had seen in the Western world. Unfortunately, Ibrahim had his dreams too. He fancied the hill terraced with cypress trees, and tiled, shady courtyards in the interior of the house. He insisted that if Reb Lemuel did not know how to construct a dome, he should at least give him pinacles on his house. Reb Lemuel, on his part, wanted battlements around the roof.

"The planning of the house was debated over and over again at Reb Lemuel's house over steaming glasses of lemon tea. On these occasions, Ibrahim brought with him his golden son, Daoud, who looked at Zion from beneath his black eyelashes. He was dressed in velvet embroidered with gold and had crimson slippers on his feet. Ziona thought him magnificent. She did not know that his chief wish, at that time, was to wear trousers and look exactly like a Western young man. He intended to do this just as soon as he was married, and no longer living in his father's house.

"When the house had been discussed brick by brick, and the air in Lemuel's parlor was heavy with smoke and the fragrance of lemons and cloves, the talk of the two men would drift to other subjects, and sooner or later, of course, they would be talking about the Jewish problem. On these occasions, Ibrahim would describe fearfully the massacre of Jews by the curved knives of the Yemenites, and Lemuel recalled the crack of Cossacks' whips which made every Jew run inside his house and close the shutters tight. And after this sort of reminiscence and the shaking of heads over the wickedness of the world, Ibrahim and Lemuel could lean back in their chairs and almost fancy that the two thousand years of wandering and dispersion had been a bad dream.

"For after all, were they not both sitting in the Land of Israel, the one from the



East and the other from the West, and between them the plans of a house which was going to be built?

**R**EB LEMUEL began the building of the house in the autumn. He bought the bricks from Arabs, for he had not yet established his own brick factory. Each Sabbath the settlers of Rosh Pinnah climbed the hill to see how far the house had progressed during the week. One day, when the first floor was finished, they observed with great excitement that the workmen had started on the second floor. This was something new in the Land of Israel.

"The house was nearly completed when the rains came and stopped the building for several weeks. And after the rains came Passover and the house was left to dry out. Ibrahim celebrated the Passover in Jerusalem and he invited Reb Lemuel to join him. Lemuel's family accordingly bundled into a cart and rode up the winding road to Jerusalem. They arrived in time for the *Seder*, which they celebrated with all the pomp of Yemenite Jews, lying on divans deep with cushions, drinking wine out of golden cups, and reciting the *Haggadah* with tunes strange to Lemuel's ear.

"When the service was over, the young people rose from the table full of the meal, merry with song, and with four cups of wine inside of them. The boy and girl, one who had seen pogroms and the other who had seen massacres, walked in the quiet garden in Jerusalem on a warm spring night, and spoke in Hebrew.

"How big the moon is," said the girl, turning her round face up to the round moon.

"It is the fifteenth of the month," said the boy devoutly, as if it was a miracle to see the moon obeying the calculations of the old sages.

"It is so bright," said the girl, "that you could read by it!"

"And I have brought a book!" cried the boy exultantly. "And I shall read it to you." Daoud opened the richly bound and illuminated book which he had brought all

the way from Yemen. It was the song of Solomon, which is customarily sung on the night of Passover, and he started to sing the ancient words of Solomon as only a Yemenite can sing them.

"When he had finished, he was quite drunk with the beauty of the night, of the words he had given voice to, and of the girl sitting quietly beside him. He jumped up and ran away into the darkness of the garden, returning with a sprig of jasmin in his hand. When he showed her its white starry blossoms and its newly broken stem, she told him gravely that he should not have plucked the flower on a holiday, when none should labor.

"At that, he lied readily, explaining that the branch had fallen down, and he found it on the dusty ground. Whereupon she believed him, and allowed him to pin the flower in her long hair. And when he kissed her and she ran into the house, the flower fell to the earth again. And he picked it up and put it between the pages of his book. And so it came about that every Passover thereafter, whenever he read the Song of Songs, he found the yellowing flower between the yellow pages, and it was a repeated surprise and a joy to him."

**A**ND what about the house at Rosh Pinnah?" someone asked Aryeh impatiently. "Did it ever get finished?"

"Please pardon the digression," said Aryeh. "The house was indeed finished, and within the space of a month was ready for occupancy. Before moving in, Ibrahim invited all the residents of Rosh Pinnah to inspect the house and call down blessings on it. Every one of the settlers who had watched the building go up brick by brick came up the hill in their best clothes to eat cake and wine on the terrace, and to congratulate Reb Lemuel on his greatest work.

"Led by Ibrahim, the citizenry of Rosh Pinnah went from room to room, inspecting everything in the house and exclaiming over the brick ovens and the oil stove. Then when everybody had thoroughly examined the first floor, they looked round expectantly

waiting to go up to the second floor. Each one felt it was an historic occasion, for there had never been a house with two floors in Rosh Pinnah before.

"Then they looked round for the staircase to ascend, and, not finding it, they turned questioningly to Reb Lemuel. At this, Reb Lemuel blushed from the roots of his beard to the roots of his hair. For the truth of the matter was that he had completely forgotten to put a staircase in. This was the first house he had ever built with a second floor, and the necessity of a staircase had simply not entered into his plans.

"As this became known, the new house at the top of the hill rocked with the laughter of all the people of Rosh Pinnah. Reb Lemuel and Ibrahim laughed the loudest of all, for they both knew that only a pioneer could make a mistake like that.

"**A**ND so I asked you if you noticed anything unusual about this house," said Aryeh. "And not one of you was observant enough to notice that there is no stairway inside this house. There is a stairway outside, which Reb Lemuel stuck on as an afterthought, after he had discovered that

there was no other way to get upstairs."

"I thought it was a fire escape," one of our group said, and we all laughed. Then we climbed up the outside stairway and examined the top floor. Aryeh pointed out every nook and cranny, and he told us so many stories about the empty house that I asked him how he knew the place so well.

"Know it!" cried Aryeh, beating his brow with his fist. "Oh, God, I can sleep in a bed four thousand miles from here and still traverse every stone and corridor in my dreams. Which is only natural," he continued. "Because on these red tiles I first learned to walk. And here, on this terrace, my grandfather gave me my first fiddle to play. That was before they packed me off to the Conservatory, of course. My grandmother spoiled me and fed me *halvah* until I was sick."

"Are you the child of Daoud and Ziona?" I asked. It didn't seem possible. He looked quite young and the story belonged to history. "Their youngest child?"

"I am the eleventh," he replied simply. "And I have a little sister who is called Hephzibah. You must really meet her some time."

## HEINE'S RELIGION

### *The Messianic Ideals of the Poet*

LEO LOWENTHAL

WHY did Heine become a Christian? We can discount many of the usual motives that lead to conversion. Heine did not expect any financial advantage. Involved to the day of his death in financial troubles—fighting with either his relatives or his publishers—he was always contemptuous of the power of money. As a young man he wrote:

"But—to use again the Frankfort idiom—aren't the Rothschilds and the Bethmans on exactly the same level? The merchant has the same creed all over the world. His office is his church, his desk his pew, his memorandum book his Bible, his stockroom his holy of holies, the bell of the stock exchange his chimes, Mammon his God, credit his faith."

And a few years later:

"... I would consider it below my dignity and a blot on my honor to become a convert for the sake of a government job in Prussia."

Neither was Heine's conversion to Christianity based on real conviction. The mere thought of it appalled him:

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"I hardly know what to say to this. Cohn assures me that Gans preaches the Gospel to convert the children of Israel. If he does so from conviction, he is a fool; if from hypocrisy, a scoundrel."

And on another occasion he wrote to his friend Moser: "I am getting to be a true Christian; I have learned to sponge on rich Jews."

Nor was his conversion prompted by a hatred of Judaism that might have led him to accept baptism in a gesture of frivolous defiance. Immediately after his conversion he spoke affectionately of his *Rabbi of Bacharach* and added with faint irony that "he would now be totally misunderstood by the Christian world."

So we have to ask again, what exactly drove this Jew to conversion? Evidently, it was neither self-interest nor conviction nor spite. Soon after his baptism he wrote sadly to a friend: "I am now hateful to the Christians and Jews alike. I greatly regret my conversion; I can't say that I have fared any better since that day. On the contrary, I have had nothing but troubles."

THE real answer is furnished by Heine himself: "The baptismal certificate is the ticket of admission to European culture."

It becomes immediately clear what Christianity means to Heine: a mere historical contingency, a springboard to reach something else, a means to an end, and that end a spiritual, though not religious, treasure.

To him, Christianity is only the outer garment, the husk of modern European culture. Dogma, the core of Christianity, is to Heine a cipher—a historical fact on which he comments sarcastically and almost contemptuously.

He accepted Christianity in order to dis-

solve it, in a messianic fury as it were. Shortly before his conversion he wrote:

I envisage daily more clearly the eventual collapse of Christianity. This vile idea has kept itself alive long enough. I call Christianity an idea—but what an idea! There are certain filthy families of ideas that have settled in the cracks of this old world—the abandoned bed of the Divine Spirit—as families of bedbugs settle in the bed of a Polish Jew. If you crush one of these bedbugs it leaves behind a stench that can be smelled for thousands of years. Christianity is such a bedbug. It was crushed eighteen hundred years ago; yet it still poisons the air for us poor Jews.

These bitter words, with their lacerated contempt for both Christian and Jew, should be convincing proof that Heine's conversion had nothing to do with a desire for Christianity. But what did he mean by "European culture"? To Heine, European culture meant the Europe of the French Revolution, the chance for a happy, free, earth-bound life. What he desired was concrete, terrestrial bliss. Needless to say, this notion is at the farthest possible remove from Christianity. But it is deep historical irony that this peculiarly Jewish trait in Heine—his desire for the life of a free people—should have driven him away from Judaism.

To students of the Jewish mind the motivating ideal is familiar and recognizable. It is the messianic impulse, a desire to dissolve all historical, denominational, national, cultural ties, or—in the words of George Lukacs—to "serve notice on the sociological conditions of our existence." It was this messianic impulse that drove Heine to become a convert. His almost unbearably intense desire for a clean, real, beautiful life—the kind of life he could never realize, or only in wistful imagination—made him change his religion like a suit, while his true convictions remained unchanged.

This messianic impulse not only made him change religions, but countries too. Although his love for Germany was second only to his love of Judaism, he left his home to live in France, the country he regarded as the contemporary symbol of human liberty. Again, just as in the case of religion,

this change was not at all prompted by a genuine love for France. Both these changes derived from the same urge to prove all boundaries relative, all historical facts merely historical, and to make his home wherever truth and freedom appeared to reign.

**H**is conversion brought in its train its own retribution. Late in life, his deep hatred of Christianity broke out once more in a passionate fit of despair. Desperately, yet in vain, he tried to make contact with traditional Judaism. His *Confessions* are perhaps the most moving document ever written by a Jewish renegade:

I owe the reawakening of my religious feeling to that holy book, upon which I look as a source of salvation and an object of pious admiration. How strange! All my life I have glided over the dance floor of philosophy, given myself up to spiritual orgies, courted all sorts of systems, without finding satisfaction—like Messalina after a night of debauchery—and now I find myself suddenly standing on the same basis as Uncle Tom—that is, on the Bible—and kneeling down beside the black friar in the same devotion. . . .

I never used to care much for Moses, probably because the Greek spirit predominated in me. I couldn't forgive the law-giver of the Jews his hatred of idols and plastic representation. I did not realize that Moses was himself a great artist and possessed of the true artistic spirit, despite his attacks on art. Only, his artistic spirit—like that of his Egyptian compatriots—was directed toward the colossal and indestructible. Yet instead of erecting structures of brick and granite, Moses wanted to build human pyramids and obelisks. He took a poor tribe of shepherds and made them over into a nation able to survive the centuries, a great, eternal, holy nation, God's own nation, which could serve as exemplar for the rest of mankind: he created Israel! . . .

I have shown a lack of reverence toward both the creator and his creation, the Jews. Again I have my Greek disposition to blame, which bridled at Jewish asceticism. My preference for Greece has since declined. I see now that the Greeks were merely handsome youths, while the Jews were, and still are, grown men, mighty, indomitable men, despite eighteen centuries of persecution and misery. I have learned to rate them at their true value. If it weren't a crazy contradiction for a fighter in the cause of revolution and democratic prin-



ciples, this writer might well be proud that his ancestors were members of the house of Israel, that he is a descendant of those martyrs who have given to the world a god and a new morality, and who have fought and suffered on all battlefields of the mind.

This, then, is the story of Heine the Christian, and it is really identical with the story of Heine the Jew. We are now in a better position to examine the question of Heine's Judaism.

THE Judaism into which Heine was born and which he challenged during his adolescence was reformed German Judaism, but no longer in the creative form given to it by Moses Mendelssohn and his generation. Its spirit was rather that of the Sunday prayer meeting. Heine hated this degeneration of the original reform movement and castigated it in the most violent terms. He saw in it nothing more than a covert tendency toward Christianity. Never was he more savage:

There are others who want an evangelical Christianity under the Jewish aegis. They make themselves a *tallis* from the wool of God's lamb, a jacket from the feathers of the Dove, and underpants from Christian love. Then they go bankrupt and their scions call themselves *God, Christ & Co.*

At the same time, Heine clearly felt a high regard for Moses Mendelssohn, though he misunderstood him in part. He found in Mendelssohn that responsible, unsentimental, and forceful love of Judaism with which he was unwilling to credit either Friedländer or Gans. The nature of Heine's misunderstanding of Mendelssohn was but one more proof of his genuinely Jewish mentality. He applauded Mendelssohn for dethroning the Talmud—to him "Jewish Catholicism"—at least in Germany. (We now know that this was by no means Mendelssohn's intention, though he may have contributed to the process.) Heine also approved Mendelssohn as wishing to maintain Jewish ceremonial law on rational rather than sentimental grounds. "As the kings in the realm of matter, so the kings in the realm of the spirit must be inexorable with regard to family

ties. They are not free to indulge in softness while holding the highest office."

The conviction that knowledge and intellectual sovereignty are all-important, places Heine in the tradition of Jewish rationalistic thinkers. It is the same conviction that moved Maimonides to purge Judaism of sentimentalities, superstitions, atavisms, and psychological contingencies, and to define its task for all time as the study of God who is one and inscrutable. Without wishing to engage in comparisons, we may say that Heine's hatred of religious fanaticism is very close to Maimonides. If we keep this in mind, the following words acquire a profound meaning:

My allegiance to Judaism is rooted solely in my radical distaste for Christianity. Contemptuous though I am of all positive religions, I may perhaps one day become a partisan of the rankest rabbinism, for I consider that the most effectual antidote.

It is true that Heine never went beyond this "perhaps." He became a victim of that historical error of the Reform movement which equated traditional Judaism with Catholicism, as though they were both expressions of dogmatic faith. Heine knew well the dangers of legalistic Judaism, its narrowness and rigidity, but had no conception of its historic vitality or its possibilities of evolution. He was unaware of intra-Jewish continuity, of the active interrelation of oral and written tradition, of Torah and Halachah. This is why he could place the Talmud in the same historical category as Catholicism:

Indeed, the Talmud is the Catholicism of the Jews. It is a Gothic cathedral, covered with childish scrolls and flourishes, yet amazing in its sky-conquering power. It is a hierarchy of religious precepts, which often concern the most ridiculous minutiae; yet all the parts are so ingeniously interlaced, support each other so vitally, and conspire with such terrible consequence, that the total effect is that of an awesome, defiant, gigantic whole.

The fall of Christian Catholicism spelled also the fall of Jewish Catholicism as embodied in the Talmud. The Talmud became meaningless, for its only purpose was gone, namely that of serving as a bulwark against Rome.

We find here the same historical fallacy that prompted Heine's conversion, i.e. the notion that Judaism could be simply divided into periods—like European culture—and that changes of Jewish forms were exclusively determined by general European changes.

**Y**ET this weakest point in Heine was at the same time his strongest; though his historical theories were wrong, he nevertheless possessed a profound historical instinct. True, it might look at times as if Heine shared the view of some modern Jewish nationalists with regard to medieval European Jewry—a view that seems to dismiss everything from the destruction of the second Temple to Pinsker or Herzl as irrelevant. Yet, thanks to his love of Judaism, he steered clear of such excesses. Especially during his youth he gave much love and attention to the study of medieval Jewry.

His consciousness of Jewish national history constituted, together with his love of life, Heine's most recognizable Jewish trait. He loved Judaism universally, in every form, every great figure, every custom, and, indeed, every Jewish farce. His love was not of the sentimental kind, but the true kind that loves with eyes open. Works like the *Rabbi of Bacherach* and the *Hebrew Melodies* bear witness to Heine's love of historical Judaism.

Only a vital representative Jewish community could have dissuaded Heine from regarding the ritual, the *Minhag*, as the center of Judaism. As it was, all he found in his milieu and in his historical sources was idolatry either of commentary or ritual. Much as he loved Judaism, he had to reject it on the grounds of reason and knowledge. Yet his love made him a nation-conscious Jew, and this Jewish nationalism found its expression in his *Jehuda Halevi*.

Heine's Jewish nationalism is again characteristic of his Jewish instinct. He sensed the continuity of Jewish history in all its manifestations; they all suggested to him a secret desire for the Promised Land. We have already seen what Europe, France, and

Germany meant to Heine. He approved of Europe, loved the Harz Mountains and Parisian society, and as a true continental European, strongly disliked the English. In all this he was perfectly serious, and yet there is a fundamental difference between Heine and the adherents of the Jewish Reform movement. Unlike the latter, he could never regard Europe as home, nor dream of a harmonious life with other nations as a possible Jewish ideal: to him life among the nations was the *Galut*.

We are here reminded of that brilliant exponent of occidental culture, Jehuda Halevi. Despite his equable life among the Moors, Jehuda did not find true rest until he had embarked on his truly anonymous exodus—shrouded as it were in a luminous mist—from the *Galut* to the homeland. As in Halevi, we find in Heine, the European *littérateur*, sporadic pangs of a deep nostalgia, of a desire to be rooted. But there is an important difference: while Jehuda shows a passionate awareness of the final goal, Heine expresses the heartbroken weariness of the poet.

**H**EINE's love of Judaism has found its most passionate expression in his attitude towards the Bible.

It is interesting to see how Heine, who was so fond of treating Jewish medieval history poetically, silenced the artist in himself whenever he spoke of the Bible. True, his poems show with what naiveté and sympathy he approached Biblical subjects, but as he grew older his references to the Bible tended to become more personal and intimate. The experience of the Bible was to him also the experience of the artist's inadequacy. The desire for a harmonious, full life, which had driven him to the baptismal font, to France, and into the arms of women, had also beguiled him into believing that artistic creation might hold the key to salvation, to a true comprehension of life. His desperate honesty forced him to face the failure of this belief. Being an artist, he felt, of course, that there were artistic presentments in the Bible, but he was aware, at the same time,

that these presentments had their roots in something deeper than art.

Heine's greatest artistic standard was embodied in the work of Shakespeare. This standard he also applied to the Bible, but in doing so, he did not lower the Bible into the sphere of art, but succeeded in raising Shakespeare above the level of art. Shakespeare, holding a mirror before mankind, without prejudice, yet unmasking all dogmatism and fanaticism, creating by artistic means but not for artistic ends—what else was he but the messianic type in its almost pure state, the type Heine imagined himself to be in his clearest moments? At the same time, Heine kept his comparison between the Bible and Shakespeare legitimate, the kind of stylistic comparison any artist might draw:

"In one writer only do I find an immediacy comparable to that of the Bible—namely, in Shakespeare. He is the only one to use words in the same terrifying bareness, a bareness that frightens us and shakes our very soul."

However, Heine is by no means a Karaite figure even if he compares Moses Mendelssohn with Luther, for having likewise abolished tradition and declared the Bible to be the sole source of religion. If superficially he reminds us of that sect which rejected all oral tradition, recognizing only the Bible, and which was at the same time the least Jewish of all Jewish sects—in essence he was little akin to the Karaites, who at heart had as little love for Judaism as their spiritual grandsons, the Sunday synagogists. Heine loved historical Judaism in all its manifestations and misunderstood it only when he tried to theorize about it. To the Karaites, the Bible was nothing but a weapon against national Judaism, which tried to create a live tradition; to Heine it contained the quintessence of the people he loved.

**I**F HEINE was a victim of the Reform movement in his disastrous identification of Judaism with Catholicism, we should keep in mind that he sharply distinguished Reform and emancipation. The Reform movement has usually defined Jewish emancipa-

tion as the liberation of the Jews from wretched living conditions and, also, as their identification with the mores of the various European nations. Heine took up the idea of liberation and at first interpreted it in exactly the same way, i.e. as the liberation of the Jews from abject serfdom. But very soon his idea of a national Jewish liberation grew into that of a universal liberation. One is reminded of the Prophets, those greatest exponents of Judaism, who evolved the liberation idea as the central idea of Judaism and then raised it from a national to a social and universal concept. Heine wrote:

What, then, is the great task of the present? The answer is emancipation; but not only of the Irish, the Greeks, the Frankfort Jews, the West Indian Negroes, and other oppressed groups; emancipation of the whole world, especially Europe, which has now reached majority and is ready to sever the iron leading-strings tying it to privileged classes such as the aristocracy.

Judaism, humanity and messianic redemption became for him an interrelated unity. He defined the fulfillment of Jewish history as the transition from the stage of suffering and dire necessity into a truly human stage of universal liberty. Judaism and universalism were for him interdependent:

Do not lose heart, beautiful Messiah, you who will save not only Israel, as the superstitious Jews imagine, but all suffering humanity! O break not, you golden chains! Keep him fettered yet a little time, that he come not too soon, the redeeming King of the world.

In those words of philosophical irony comes to the fore Heine's remoteness from the Christian concept of salvation in the middle of history, and his genuinely Jewish hope and confidence in the future, even when the hour is dark.

He was a critic of capitalism, but he criticized it on spiritual rather than economic grounds. Judaism was for him a symbol of liberation. He was allowed to return to the symbol, but not to the reality the symbol stood for. He loved the symbol, though it made him suffer. He saw a sickness in Judaism, but he approved the sickness.

## THE MONTH IN HISTORY

### The American Economy

THE division of the world into two parts, long plain for all to see, was formalized. The Soviet Union would have nothing to do with an offer of the American Secretary of State to help Europe if Europe would help itself. A precondition of the offer was an analysis of Europe's economic position. The Soviet Union and most of the satellite states declined. When Finland, Czechoslovakia, and Poland seemed on the verge of reacting favorably, they were promptly called to order by Moscow.

The Soviet Union had to attack the Marshall plan as imperialism not because it might become imperialism, but because it might not. Soviet tactics left a great deal of room for maneuvering. But there was no provision in Soviet tactics for a non-imperialist America. In these circumstances, any handy reason for attacking Marshall's proposal was in order, even the charge that it was a threat to sovereignty, an accusation that must have caused grim amusement to the peoples of Eastern Europe when they heard it from the Soviet proconsuls who were ruling their countries.

With the division formalized, the great unknown was the American economic system. An economy-minded and still essentially isolationist American Congress might, on the basis of its fear of Communism, appropriate the money to effectuate the Marshall suggestion. With this done, it might even come about that the money would be distributed abroad in such a way as not to antagonize and immobilize the progressive

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forces in the respective countries. But even if all this got under way, it would no doubt collapse if the American economy should come upon a new depression.

### Rosy-Cheeked Consumptive

What was the condition of the American economy? Some saw its condition as that of a rosy-cheeked consumptive. In a mid-year economic report to Congress, President Truman said: "Americans today live in a richer and more productive economy and are enjoying its benefits more equitably than ever before in peace-time history." In terms of the economic millennium that New Deal figure jugglers had outlined, America had arrived. Employment had reached 60,000,000 civilian jobs. But the price of food and clothing was twice as high as it had been before the war. The price of shelter, held down by rent control, was now beginning to rise as well. The crucial point about shelter was that there wasn't any of it.

The fact was that the American economy was operating on a high level for artificial reasons and the way in which it was operating took little account of basic human needs. Even the President admitted that production was being sustained by the temporary reconversion demands of industry and business, by the backlog demands of consumers, by the extensive use of savings and credit, and by the extraordinary excess of exports over imports.

America's unplanned economy produced serious contradictions. In proportion to the desperate need, practically no homes were being built for those who required them most. The shortage of homes was something Americans lived with and knew about twenty-four hours a day. But they were less aware of the importance of the shortage of boxcars. Boxcars made the American economy move. More particularly, boxcars moved food grains from the breadbasket of America to the ports from which they



were shipped to the starving abroad. But grain was piling up all over the breadbasket on account of a shortage of boxcars. Because there seemed to be no immediate profit in it, the intricate and resourceful American economy was not providing shelter for Americans or building transportation for food grains for starving people abroad. But if Americans had to live in decrepit and overcrowded homes, the intricate and resourceful American economy could provide compensation. If it could not provide homes and boxcars, it could provide enough television sets for every saloon in America. And if the American family was destined to be unhappy in its home, it would not be too long before there could be a mass escape from the home via the automobile. It was expected that nearly 5,000,000 motor vehicles would be produced in 1947. It would not be long before Americans would be able to resume mutilating each other on highways and America's twelve-cylinder civilization would be back to normal.

### The UN Investigation

THE United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, after five weeks of open hearings, private conversations, and on-the-spot look-sees, departed Palestine on July 20. In thirteen public hearings, it had heard thirty-four principal witnesses, of whom five were Christians and none were Arabs. It had accumulated a plane-load of documents. Out of this activity, including a clandestine conversation between the committee chairman and the commandant of Irgun Zvai Leumi, nothing remarkable emerged except a demonstration of the Zionists' capacity for patient reiteration of their claims.

The principal argument for the Jewish Agency was made by David Ben Gurion, chairman of the Agency executive. The *sine qua non* in the Zionist case, he said, was recognition of the Jewish state. "We will not consider any settlement which excludes complete independence and equality as a nation for us in this country."

This meant opposition to continuation of the Mandate and to establishment of a UN trusteeship. However, it did not mean that the UN would be without a role in the situation. Ben Gurion asked that the Jewish Agency be given authority to bring 1,000,000 Jews into Palestine in the shortest pos-

sible time and to undertake the development of the country to accommodate them. While this program was being carried out, the UN would have responsibility for security, he explained. He was asked whether this would mean the use of force by the UN.

"You have to decide whether what we ask is right or wrong," he said. "If it is right and force is necessary, you ought to apply it."

His plan would differ from a trusteeship, he said, in that "there will be an unequivocal statement that Palestine is becoming a Jewish state."

The establishment of the state would be divided into a "material" and a "legal" phase, Ben Gurion said. The first would involve immigration and economic development. When the UN had satisfied itself that "the main purpose for which this country is destined—to solve the Jewish problem—is being fulfilled, then the second, the legal, phase will be realized—by formal proclamation of a Jewish state."

In reply to a question about partition and federation, Ben Gurion said:

"The Jewish Agency last year decided that while we believe our right is to all of Western Palestine, we are prepared to consider a viable Jewish state if offered. If by a federal state it is meant independence, but as a member of a larger federation, such as Australia, which though linked with England is independent, then the Jews are prepared to consider it if the UN Special Committee and the UN decide this is best for the entire region. But if federal state implies a province like one of America's forty-eight states, the Jews won't consider it as this negates the principle that the Jews are an independent people."

### Weizmann for Partition

It was left to Dr. Chaim Weizmann to get down to realities. "Partition and independence of the partitioned part" was the only feasible solution, the former President of the World Zionist Organization told the committee. The great advantage of this solution, he said, was its finality. "It will give us the opportunity of continuing and expanding our work in peace, and it will give the Arabs assurance that we are not going to encroach upon their rights and their territory."

(In Paris, another Zionist spokesman re-

ferred to partition in a way that threw doubt on its finality as a solution. A Jewish Telegraphic Agency report read as follows: "Declaring that 'the frontiers of a state are never eternal,' Dr. Nahum Goldmann, member of the Jewish Agency executive, said here last night that Jews must insist on creation of a Jewish state in Palestine now, 'even if territorial concessions are necessary.'")

To be viable, Weizmann said, a partitioned Jewish state would require accessibility to water for irrigation and electrical power, and would have to include an undeveloped area. These conditions, he said, were a minimum, not a bargaining maximum. Without them, no responsible Jewish body would accept partition.

Would partition mean trouble with the Arabs? Weizmann was asked. A similar question had usually been asked of official Zionist witnesses after presentation of their solution. Their replies were full of confidence in the military prowess of the Yishuv. A Hagana memorandum assured the Committee that Zionist military strength was "adequate to defend Jewish Palestine against any attacks from the Arabs of this country" regardless of any help the Palestine Arabs might get from the Arab League states. Weizmann's reply was more circumspect and was not based on resort to arms. He said:

"It would be foolish if I were to say that everything will go smoothly. Nothing goes smoothly in the world. I do believe that a great many thoughtful Arabs, if they feel this project is set into motion with all the authority and dignity and moral force which you and the United Nations command, will eventually not disagree. Perhaps the Mufti will not acquiesce—perhaps some on our side will not acquiesce—but I do not think that these are insurmountable difficulties."

### The British Stand

The Palestine government presented its evidence in closed sessions, but some of its memoranda were made public. In one of these was a statement of the British attitude from which flowed its policy towards terrorists and blockade runners.

"The right of any community to use force as a means of gaining its political ends is

not admitted in the British Commonwealth," the memorandum said. "Since the beginning of 1945, the Jews have implicitly claimed this right and have been supported by an organized campaign of lawlessness, murder, and sabotage, their contention being that, whatever other interest might be concerned, nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of a Jewish state and free Jewish immigration into Palestine."

### The Communist Enigma

Weizmann, in his testimony, said that the Gromyko declaration in the Special Session of the General Assembly "could have been made by a Zionist—he's not a Zionist—but it was a full Zionist speech." The mystery of the full Zionist speech made by the full Communist comrade continued to intrigue observers who watched for more precise indications of the Soviet position.

(The day before Weizmann testified, it was announced in Moscow that a Ukrainian writer by the name of Kipnis had been expelled from the Ukrainian Writers Union for writing a story of "Zionist nationalist" character. This "foul act" was denounced as "unworthy of a Soviet writer.")

Yugoslavia was the Soviet bellwether on the Committee and the bell was heard tinkling all over the meadow. Yugoslavia was for visiting Cyprus and for hearing representatives of the Cyprus detainees, but it was against visiting the DP camps and against hearing a representative of the International Refugee Organization. The Yugoslav delegate took the initiative in the Committee's renewed plea to the Arab Higher Committee to drop its boycott of the hearings, and he was also the most outspoken in his opposition to the execution of three Irgun terrorists. He displayed the keenest interest in all anti-British evidence. All this was reminiscent of Gromyko's performance at the Special Session of the General Assembly. It made perfect sense in terms of Soviet foreign policy.

The Committee listened at length to three spokesmen of the Jewish Communist party of Palestine which claimed 1,400 members. These witnesses seemed less interested in any particular future form of government for Palestine than they were in the departure of the British. "Whichever political proposals the United Nations Special

Committee on Palestine will recommend, they should include the demand for evacuation of British forces from Palestine," said one of the Communist spokesmen. However, partition was opposed and some kind of bi-nationalism was advocated.

Samuel Mikunis, secretary of the party, coupled his denunciation of British imperialism with an attack on the "conquest of the country" policy of the Jewish Agency. Without these two factors, he said, the problem of immigration would not have acquired its present character. Immigration, he continued somewhat obscurely, was one of the important "secret weapons" of British imperialism to divert the peoples of Palestine from their fight for freedom and to incite them instead against each other.

The Arab Communist party in Palestine, observing the Arab boycott, did not testify before the Committee.

### Mountain to Mohammed

The UN Committee, while in Palestine, urged the Arab Higher Committee to reconsider its refusal to testify, but the appeal was unsuccessful. To get some statement of the Arab case on its record, the Committee invited the Arab League states to testify. They accepted and the Committee heard them in Beirut, where the Lebanese foreign minister presented a brief in behalf of all the Arab League states except Transjordan. The case was familiar: "An Arab independent government on a democratic basis should be set up without delay." The establishment of a Jewish state would be resisted by force.

Transjordan asked for a separate appearance, and seven members of the Committee went to Amman to hear a statement by the Transjordan prime minister and to confer privately with King Abdullah. Since Transjordan was reported to be ready to support partition if it could incorporate the Arab areas of Palestine, its request for a separate hearing aroused some suspicion. However, its plea was unexceptionable from the Arab standpoint.

### Visiting the DP's

Late in July, the Committee assembled in Geneva to remain until a report had been hammered out.

It had decided against visiting the Jewish detainees in Cyprus. Those voting against

going were Australia, Canada, Czechoslovakia, India, Peru, and Sweden. Those in favor of going were Guatemala, Uruguay, and Yugoslavia. Iran and the Netherlands abstained. The Committee also voted against a hearing for representatives of the Cyprus detainees. The members voting against were Australia, Canada, India, Peru, and Sweden. Those in favor of the hearing were Guatemala and Yugoslavia. Czechoslovakia and Iran abstained.

In Geneva, after hearing a representative of the International Refugee Organization and getting little out of him, the Committee decided to send an inspection team to the displaced persons' camps. This move was supported by Australia, Canada, Guatemala, Netherlands, Sweden, and Uruguay. It was opposed by India, Iran, Peru, and Yugoslavia. Czechoslovakia abstained.

As the Committee began to work out its recommendations, there were some signs of by Uruguay. The questions asked by the how things stood. The Guatemala member was obviously, even actively, sympathetic to the Zionist case. He was usually supported Indian member were based on Arab arguments.

The Committee chairman, Justice Emil Sandstrom of Sweden, was reported to be in favor of partition. The Committee as a whole was reported to be split between partition and bi-nationalism.

Whatever the Committee recommended, it seemed certain that "the termination of the mandate over Palestine and the recognition of independence as one state" would be discussed at the General Assembly meeting to which the Committee's report would be made. It was announced at Lake Success that, at the request of Saudi Arabia and Iraq, this item had been placed on the provisional agenda of the General Assembly.

### The Terror

DURING the two years that ended on June 30, 1947, terrorism in Palestine had cost 270 lives and a property loss of about \$6,000,000. In July 1947, the violence reached its peak in ferocity. Terror was no longer the calculated instrument of political policy. Its practitioners tried to make a verbal relationship between means and ends, but this effort was the only characteristic that differentiated them from wild beasts whose law

of survival rested on stealth, speed, and strength. Palestine had become a jungle.

The events of July were the consequence of the bombing of the Acre prison fortress. Three young members of Irgun were captured and sentenced to death. A majority of the members of the UN Committee expressed "concern as to the possible unfavorable repercussions" of carrying out the sentences. Meantime, the Irgun kidnapped two British army sergeants and held them as hostages.

So the matter stood for two tense weeks while more pleas were made for the condemned of both sides. However, no one expected anything but the worst. There was nothing in the attitude and actions of the British toward the terrorists or the terrorists toward the British to give hope that either would yield. The three terrorists were hanged in Acre prison; next day, the two hostages, garroted, were found hanging from eucalyptus trees near Nathanya. As they were cut down, a booby trap exploded and one of the corpses was blown to bits.

Next day, infuriated British soldiers and police ran wild in Tel Aviv and killed five Jews.

### The British Reaction

Among the pleas made for the British hostages before they were hanged, the most significant was the message from Richard Crossman, member of the Anglo-American Committee, and Maurice Edelman, both Labor MP's representing Coventry, the home of one of the hostages.

"The kidnapping of two British sergeants in Nathanya is a crime which affronts the conscience of every decent person whether Gentile or Jew," the message read. "If those innocent men have been taken as hostages, this action adds to the responsibility of those involved, since the taking of guiltless hostages is a barbarous action contrary to civilized law and human ethics. The soldiers involved are the sons of ordinary working people, one of them from Coventry, the city we represent. We call on every Jew to help obtain their release and prevent a crime from reaching fruition which will not only receive mankind's condemnation, but will have disastrous results for the cause which the kidnappers mistakenly think they served."

The day after the hostages were hanged,

the *Times* of London remarked that "the bestialities practiced by the Nazis themselves could go no further."

The Irgun action was bitterly condemned by Zionist spokesmen, but such condemnations did little to stop the growth of anti-Zionist sentiment in Britain, and the consolidation of public support for the government's policy in Palestine.

### Hagana vs. Irgun

The enmity between Hagana and Irgun Zvai Leumi seemed to be growing. Irgun, known to have considerable influence among the younger members of Hagana, seemed to be carrying on the tactic of united front from below. This tactic involved attacks on the top leadership of Hagana.

One of the hardest of these attacks came from the commander of Irgun while Hagana was searching for the two British hostages. Asserting that Hagana had become a "militia protecting the British," the Irgun leader charged that Hagana had known in advance of the plan to dynamite the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on July 22, 1946. Military leaders of both organizations had met to plan the final details, he declared, but Hagana rejected it on the question of timing. However, he added, after the offices of the Jewish Agency were raided by the British on June 29 and high Agency officials were arrested, the commander of Hagana gave his consent.

The Irgun accusation recalled the British White Paper issued after the King David explosion which included documents linking members of the Jewish Agency with Irgun.

### The Displaced

CONGRESS adjourned with bills providing for temporary lifting of immigration barriers still in committee. The administration had given strong support to the passage of such legislation. Secretary of State George C. Marshall and Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson appeared personally before the House Judiciary Committee. Secretary of Commerce W. Averell Harriman sent in a supporting statement from Europe. Finally, on July 7, President Truman sent a message to Congress urging the passage of "suitable legislation as speedily as possible."

The President's message was carefully



constructed to give the proper emphasis to arguments that would interest the traditional opponents of immigration.

It was argued that such legislation would break down America's restrictive immigration policy. The President gave assurances that "we are dealing here solely with an emergency problem" growing out of the war. "I wish to emphasize that there is no proposal for a general revision of our immigration statutes," he said.

It was argued that the immigrants would be an economic burden. "These displaced persons," said the President, "are hardy and resourceful or they would not have survived." Their occupational backgrounds include "a wide variety of professions, crafts, and skills." The country "could readily absorb the relatively small number" who would be admitted, the President added.

The economic argument worked the other way. To turn the refugees loose in Germany "would seriously aggravate our problems there," the President said.

It was argued that the immigrants would be a subversive element. But, said the President, they would have to meet all the tests of fitness for admission of immigrants, which include "adequate guarantees against the entry of those who are criminals or subversives."

If it was Communism that Congress was worried about, the President could put the shoe on the other foot. "Because they are not communists and are opposed to communism, they have stanchly resisted all efforts to induce them to return to communist-controlled areas." Such efforts, the President said, he has been "firm in resisting." And in

this policy, he told the Congressmen, "I am confident I have your support."

There was also, at the end, a humanitarian argument. "Let us remember that these are fellow human beings," the President reminded Congress. "Let us join in giving them a chance at decent and self-supporting lives."

### Incidental Advantage

The fact was that if any refugees were going to be admitted into the United States it would be on the basis of this country's anti-Communist policy. Congress was willing to consider the matter with some care because it was interested in the anti-Communism of the displaced rather than in their homelessness.

The testimony that made the deepest impression on the Congressmen was presented by Msgr. John O'Grady of the National Conference of Catholic Charities. Msgr. O'Grady was blunt: "I say let's do something about this or just forget about the whole thing and close up the detention camps and send those people back to their countries and forget about combating Communism." Because no Congressman wanted to forget about combating Communism, the refugees might still find a home in America.

Meantime the British intercepted a boatload of 4,500 Jewish refugees trying to run the Palestine blockade, and sent them back to France, whence they had started. What France should do about them became a subject for discussion at meetings of the French Cabinet and National Assembly. By the end of July, the refugees were still afloat off the coast of France.

SIDNEY HERTZBERG

## RACISM AND AMERICA'S WORLD POSITION

### *The Potential of Democratic Nationalism*

CARL DREHER

**I**S THE time not far distant when Jews must decide to "fight political nationalism uncompromisingly and on principle, inside Jewish life, as well as outside"? Ernest Munz, who posed the question in his article "Nationalism is the Enemy" (COMMENTARY, August 1946), gives an emphatic answer. Jews, he suggests, are the natural protagonists in the fight against nationalism, which in its fascist phase singled them out for destruction and will assuredly repeat the performance wherever it assumes active and militant form. Doctor Munz has little confidence that it will be possible to "cleanse nationalism of the taint of fascism"—so little, that in effect he equates nationalism and fascism through most of his argument. Only towards the end does he betray any uncertainty on this crucial point, when he concedes that in the Western democracies "the question of nationalism is still very much undecided. . . ."

THE experience of the past fifteen years has made the question of nationalism a crucial one for all the peoples of the world, and for Jews in particular. In "Nationalism is the Enemy," published in the August 1946 COMMENTARY, Ernest Munz suggested that nationalism in any form could no longer be divorced from fascism and racism, and that it was consequently the duty of all freedom-loving people—and of Jews especially, within Jewish organized life, as well as generally—to fight it uncompromisingly. CARL DREHER here offers the view that certain types of nationalism may, on the contrary, serve as bulwarks against fascism and racism. Mr. Dreher has written for a great many periodicals, including *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, *Common Sense*, the *New Yorker*, and the *American Mercury*. He has published a book, *The Coming Show-down* (1942), and is at present working on a volume dealing with Soviet-American relations. Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1896, Mr. Dreher came to this country as a child. He is a graduate of the College of the City of New York.

Very likely a majority of American Jews are sympathetic, as they should be, with the supra-national world-state political orientation in which Doctor Munz sees their only hope of survival. But one would question whether, as a group, the Jews could or should espouse this cause formally. For one thing, their enemies would not be slow in seeing to it that their adherence to a supra-national ideology was construed as nothing less than national treason—which was precisely the Nazi propaganda line.

In my opinion, the outcome of the war has created a new and more complex relationship between nationalism and racism. Before we begin to make up our minds, we had better examine the postwar racist situation more closely, particularly as it affects the United States, in which over half of the world's Jews now live. We must try to gauge the magnitude and direction of the racist and anti-racist forces operating in this country and to follow their variations as events unfold. In short, we must, as in military operations, try to get a clear intelligence picture at the outset, and by successive modifications keep it in conformity with the facts.

**F**IRST, let us consider those factors which in general support the idea, implicit in Doctor Munz's position, that nothing in the American situation precludes a fascist-racist development more or less paralleling that which occurred in Central European nationalism.

On superficial inspection, our country's protective barriers seem rather formidable. The dominant American tradition has been one of unity in diversity—what Doctor Munz calls the "amalgamating American conception," contrasted with the "separatist European notion of nationality." The Bilbo-

Rankin version of Americanism is not the generally accepted American ideal. Even in areas where color racism is endemic, a certain number of the acquiescent whites view the activities of the more violent racists with distaste and, by some indications, with increasing civic uneasiness.

Moreover, America's multiformity of religious belief, ancestry, and other associations tends to expose the flanks of any group that sets out to persecute others or to aggrandize itself at their expense. Both as a practical matter, therefore, and because it would involve a break with a widely accepted tradition, it would be considerably more difficult to racialize society in America than it was in Germany.

But this is all that can be said, and a critical survey reveals serious weaknesses in our defenses. Much depends on the temper of the people who verbally subscribe to American traditions. One cannot be confident that what we may loosely call the American character presents any insurmountable obstacle to a catastrophic upsurge of political racism.

On one side we find a small group of racist activists, on the other a group of anti-racist activists of about the same proportions. The great bulk of the people lies in between, not greatly concerned, as yet, one way or the other. It may be that this seeming indifference masks a latent idealism that will rise to crush the racists should they become a serious threat to democratic institutions. If so, it is very effectively hidden. It is more likely that what looks like apathy is exactly that, and apathy is no protection.

Moreover, while the South may be more uneasy than in the past about its treatment of the Negroes, there are indications that in the country in general anti-racist sentiment in relation to the Jews is on the wane. Certainly America is not responding impressively to what has happened and is happening to the Jews abroad. In the first decade of this century more horror was aroused in non-Jewish America by a single Russian pogrom in which a few score Jews perished than can apparently now be aroused by the massacre of millions. For this there are ob-

vious psychological reasons, but it remains true that there is no ground for any assurance that, under readily conceivable conditions of economic frustration and blind popular resentment, the Jew-baiters now practicing in a modest way would not be able to gain their end. If they should content themselves with mass expropriation and imprisonment of Jews, progressives, and similar quarry, they might even expect to be acclaimed as humanitarians by contrast with their German prototypes.

And if, among the generality of Americans, anti-racism still predominates, it is in a form too diffuse to be relied on under crisis conditions. It is a comfortable acquiescence in what is conceived to be the right thing, rather than a fighting creed, and it is not supported by a clear understanding of racism as a subversive force. It is aptly expressed by the term most commonly used: "tolerance." But tolerance of Jews might become tolerance of fascists—as has actually happened to a disquieting extent among our occupation forces in Germany.

**N**OR do we find anything in recent trends in American history to refute the above conclusions. Those who base their hopes on such American traditions as that of the melting pot must avert their eyes from the domestic developments of the past twenty years, which are rather more to the point than inscriptions on statues or the precepts of civics courses. Immigration was welcome (although immigrants were subject to a certain degree of discrimination) as long as the country had the feeling of illimitable growth and the swings of the business cycle were superimposed on a consistently rising curve. Though the tradition of American hospitality to all peoples survives, since the turn of the century immigration has been progressively curtailed. Indeed, the 1924 law, which froze quotas on the basis of the number of natives of European countries residing in the United States in 1890, has unmistakable racist overtones, if not a basically racist philosophy. It is no accident that this statute was passed at the zenith of the Ku Klux Klan agitation.

incidentally with the support of a major segment of organized labor. The Klan itself is less of a factor in American politics than it was, but its ideas remain.

Nor are racist and xenophobic tendencies confined to frustrated backwoodsmen. During the 1944 campaign a vice-presidential candidate, whose political ambitions still flourish, inquired whether the Oswego group of refugees, largely composed, he said, of "intellectuals," had been "cleared with Sidney." Today, despite the sincere, if not entirely disinterested, efforts of political leaders like President Truman, Governor Dewey, and Mayor O'Dwyer, this nation of 141,000,000 shows no willingness to open its arms to a hundred thousand victims of fascist and neo-fascist persecution who happen to be Jews. The fire under the melting pot has cooled, only insignificant amounts of new material are being admitted, and the whole mass, imperfectly fused as it is, shows signs of solidifying.

Nor can we discover among the currently active institutions and institutionalized faiths any that could provide strong defenses against fascist racism. Free enterprise, and its supposed correlate, respect for the individual? These are catchwords rather than a way of life faithfully practiced. The big business interests that preach free enterprise the loudest have no stomach for the rigors of competition—those are for the small fry. And in how many of the corporations they control has a Jew or a Negro been offered an equal chance? The churches? The evangelical creeds spawned the Ku Klux Klan, Catholicism too has its racist wing, and the Protestant churches by and large give little more than verbal loyalty to movements of racial equalitarianism. The degree of infection varies, but none shows much readiness for a life-and-death stand on this or any other crucial moral issue. Organized labor was steam-rollered in Germany and Italy; in the United States it is viewed with a jaundiced eye by the middle class and the farmers, and its strategy is likely to become increasingly defensive. Moreover, American labor has its own racist cleavages in the AFL, the rail-

road brotherhoods, and even in the CIO.

Thus the broad picture does not rule out an extension of active American racism to take in Jews as well as colored minorities. It is true that this could come only as an accompaniment of fascism, and the preconditions of fascism exist, as yet, only in incipient form. But protracted economic depression, international tension, and mass anxiety could bring them to full development, and little is being done in the way of social and economic adjustment to forestall this. As for the hope still lingering in some quarters that an American fascism might not be racist, or at least not anti-Semitic, that hardly requires discussion. The advantages that anti-Semitism offers to fascist movements are such that one cannot conceive of an American fascism desiring, or being able, to get along without them.

For all its conjectural elements, the foregoing makes out a good case for Doctor Munz's theory. But it does not follow that what every thinking man fears *may* happen, *must* happen. There is still to be considered an institutional complex which offers a more hopeful possibility of exerting decisive counter-racist force, and that is precisely the one on which Doctor Munz bases his argument: nationalism.

What nationalism? Obviously not that of America First, the Gerald L. K. Smiths, and the gutter press. They have been sitting on the edge of the fascist whore's bed for some time now and for them racism is one of her greatest attractions. But they are not yet all of America, and may never be. Wendell Willkie was a nationalist too. So were Franklin D. Roosevelt and Theodore Roosevelt. So is Bernard Baruch. So is every American who loves his country, however inarticulately. All that is required is that he learn the lesson of recent history. It is a pretty obvious lesson.

What the last war demonstrated—and perhaps this will turn out to be the chief return for all the bloodshed and destruction—is that nationalism and racism are in conflict. Morally this is self-evident. But the matter does



not have to be argued only on the plane of morality and idealism. The case is equally strong when it is examined on the simple basis of self-interest.

In its basic principles nationalism of the American variety is founded on the theory that the national culture evolves from the total political group. It is not racially or ethnically based. "Outsiders" may be assimilated to make their contributions to the culture: are given individual opportunity and rewards on the basis of individual capacity. In accordance with this principle, political nationalism can select new adherents and utilize those already available for the enhancement of national strength and for the defense and survival of the culture. The nation is grounded in a reality principle concerned with the here and now.

Racism, on the contrary, is concerned with ancestry, that is to say with the past. Its theory holds that certain elements are unassimilable—in fact, poisonous to the national culture. This ethnic toxicity is determined by standards that the individual is powerless to alter, and is even aggravated by any apparent merit. Racism is thus a kind of anthropological doctrine of predestination. With the current realities of national strength and international competition it has nothing to do. Its essential mysticism appears when efforts are made to find support for it in the physical world. In the blood as a liquid tissue, nothing can be found. The racist dabbles in the cephalic index, pigmentation and other physical criteria, but even though mystical concepts exploit physical measurements, the standard remains mystical and the investigators are merely chasing their own complexes as young dogs chase their tails.

Scientifically, the problem is insoluble. Politically, it can be solved—at a price. Hitler paid the price; the Germans are paying it still. His idea was to use racism to inflame nationalism. The expulsion of the Jews was to unify and strengthen Germany. Who were the Jews? Politics requires simplicity: one Jewish grandparent debarred the individual from membership in the *Volk*. He could

have one, two, or even eight Jewish great-grandparents whose children had been Aryanized by baptism or less formal infiltration into the German community. In that case the Jewish virus had been sufficiently diluted and the Jew turned into a German.

In practice, even greater compromises were made. If the Jew could run an airline or develop a rocket bomb, he might be Aryanized on the ground of illegitimacy or by fraudulent certification of his descent. In such cases the reality principle prevailed over the mysticism of the blood. The military cost of racism was too high for the racist community to pay. Still, the policy as a whole was carried out drastically enough; and in the end the demonology of the Jews played its part in the defeat of Germany, perhaps a decisive part. What happened was that technology caught up with the racist state. The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute and racism did not mix. Nowadays, power rests on a technological foundation. Since the final test of national strength is war, such factors as industrial capacity, research facilities, and medical standards are vital. All these activities are managed by human beings, and the intrusion of any factor other than individual ability detracts from the power a country can ultimately bring to bear in international competition.

In no country is there enough real executive, industrial, and scientific talent to go around. When new weapons and counter-weapons must be evolved on pain of defeat, no one can tell who will make a crucial discovery, or how long it will take to calculate, blueprint, and tool it into a usable device. The same applies to the utilization of knowledge already available, or the failure to utilize it. Wars are won and lost by such technological differentials, and social factors underlie the technological.

Conversely, the democracies and Russia (whose pattern of nationalism is also non-racist) possessed an advantage which may or may not have been decisive, but which at all times was operating on their side. What with Chamberlainism and the slow conversion of American industry from free

enterprise to wartime semi-collectivism, Germany came close to winning the war. With atomic explosives she might have won it. A military incident, the destruction of the heavy-water plant in Norway, played a part in her failure, but heavy water was not essential to the manufacture of atom bombs, as American experience proved. By and large Germany had as good a chance to develop atomic weapons as any other nation, probably better. She had Planck, Hahn, Strassmann, Heisenberg, Geiger, and many others of formidable stature in the atomic field. Yet she failed to make the grade. She no longer had Finkelsteins, Cohens, or even Meitners, the last a part-Jewish Lutheran. Some of her key people had gone into exile; it may be that they possessed the key to the puzzle—or non-Germans like Niels Bohr, a half-Jew, who could not stomach Nazi methods and *Weltanschauung*.

The United States was not so handicapped. The successful development here was initiated by technological thinkers who sold the idea to the President, the scientific community, and the armed forces. This seminal group included numerous European expatriates, Jews among others. Once the idea was launched, it was carried forward by the best men available, whether Jews, Gentiles, or Hottentots. They succeeded. Americans are a practical people: they will hardly fail to get the point, and perhaps they will act on it.

This process goes on all the time and war only tallies the score. When David Sarnoff came to the United States in childhood, a penniless alien, and in due time rose to be president of the Radio Corporation of America and a brigadier general, the industrial and military potential of the United States was by that much increased. If Sarnoff had remained in Russia and Russia had remained racist, the increment of strength latent in his make-up would have been lost. In the Soviet Union he might have become head of the state radio trust and made his contribution to the national welfare, as he has done in the United States. But in Germany, even under the Hohenzollerns, his

chances would have been considerably poorer, while the Nazis would have had to throw him on the scrap heap in conformity with their racist obsessions. Their predecessors murdered Rathenau, a somewhat similar figure, whose technological-administrative talents had been a factor in enabling Germany to hold out in the First World War as long as she did.

THIS contradiction between nationalism and racism has wider application than in the field of engineering and administrative personnel and ideas. Nor is it necessary that a racial minority be persecuted with the unmitigated ferocity that characterized Nazi Germany. It is sufficient that its members suffer discrimination in educational and economic opportunities and be made to feel they do not belong. The result, in wartime, is poor morale, and the result of poor morale is poor performance.

The outstanding example is the role of the American Negro in both World Wars. Neither as fighters, nor as service troops, nor as workers in civilian industry, did the Negroes make the contribution to the war effort that they could have made if our society, before and during the war, had given them an even chance.

In the last war we were perhaps able to afford the luxury of color racism, although the net effect must have been an avoidable loss of lives. But in that war our racism appeared mild by contrast with that of the enemy, and we had on our side the one great nation which has succeeded in eliminating racism as a serious factor in its internal political structure. It is perhaps not worth speculating on the role of racism in a third world war, since such a conflict would be next door to suicide for all concerned. Nevertheless, racism might play a part in determining who would lose everything and who would retain enough to survive after a fashion. A contest between the Anglo-American powers and the Russian bloc might turn into a color war, with the pigmented races allied preponderantly with Russia.

The "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity

Sphere" of the Japanese was a transparent fake, but it achieved considerable success in its appeal to the emerging counter-racist movements of the East. The Russians have less flimsy ideological weapons to which they can resort in a clash with any powers infected with the racist virus and they will certainly not hesitate to use them. As matters stand the Russians practice political, non-ethnic nationalism much better than we do, and could make a stronger bid for the support of the non-white three-quarters of the world's population.

But this is only one phase of the matter. War or no war, the nations will continue to strive for power, prestige, commercial advantage, better living standards, and ideological influence. Each will have to reckon with internal divisions that weaken its scientific, industrial, and political potential, as well as military. Among these eroding influences racism stands out. Conversely, racial equality is a powerful resource and stimulant to internal achievement, and in many situations a prime selling point in the extension of national influence abroad. These are practical truths which cannot be ignored. On the domestic front, our industrial progress and our internal economic health are powerfully influenced for good or evil by our success or lack of it in eradicating race discrimination in employment and educational opportunity. Aside from the question of national morale and inner strength, race hatred involves cost and wastage in dollar-and-cents terms which represent a heavy burden on any region which practices it—as Felix S. Cohen, among others, has so cogently demonstrated ("The People Vs. Discrimination," March 1946 COMMENTARY). On the political side, our representatives in the United Nations are already embarrassed by the stigma of racism, and by all indications they will be increasingly handicapped in the future.

For all our productive *élan* and our beneficence, we are not conspicuously popular in the world's markets and chancellories, or among the world's people. Our armed forces

did not impress the Indians or the Chinese, to cite two examples, with their brotherly sentiments, and we are confronted at the present moment with an unpleasant racial situation in the Philippines which the Information and Education Division of the War Department is trying to combat.

The fact is that in a world which judges by results, to spread the gospel of democracy one must show the will to perfect oneself in its practice—and that includes racial democracy as much as free speech and free enterprise. All these external dangers and hindrances would seem to furnish compelling reasons, on grounds of nationalistic self-interest alone, for the United States to curb its existing racist proclivities, and gradually to eradicate them.

As DOCTOR MUNZ says, the question of nationalism in the United States is undecided. The task before the American people is to decide it. They can choose, or acquiesce in, the fascist solution, such as it is. The primary factor on the side of this unhappy outcome is that it is easier to rush down a steep place into the sea than it is to climb a mountain. The alternative solution is the creation of a 20th-century nationalism—anti-racist, anti-fascist, and progressive in the sense that it will bring economic and social mores more or less into step with 20th-century technology. A nationalism of this sort would be entirely compatible with supra-nationalism; the two are complementary and could evolve together. But it will not be easy: racism is a deeply rooted force and its liquidation will require time and fundamental economic changes. We may or may not be capable of the adjustments required.

If we are not, if we hold racism and its related vices dearer than national welfare, we shall in effect be forfeiting to Russian nationalism, enlightened enough to shun racism, the opportunity to demonstrate the irreconcilability of nationalism and racism under modern conditions.

# FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

## SCANDAL ON AN ISLAND

### *The Strange Case of the Reverend Guldberg*

SOLOMON F. BLOOM

**N**OTHING about the Jews is fixed, not even the reactions they evoke. The metropolis with its Jewish masses, the small town with its dozen families, the isolated village or farm where the Jew is but the echo of a name—each sees the Jews differently.

An island is a thing apart. There the inheritance of religion and social tradition is most pure, the intercourse with Jews most rare and incidental. There, paradoxically, the rejection of the Jew gains color, but at the same time suffers a discount, too, because of the rejection of the mainland and all its works. Detachment builds, for good and ill, a refuge from the world.

On such an island off the coast of New England, beloved of vacationists, and even more of natives, I sensed the special attitude to Jews long before the outbreak of the scandal about the preacher.

Visiting its remote moors was like stepping into the 17th century. The speech had almost an Elizabethan ring; many a word which elsewhere is confined to the library is here put to work every day. I detected in the

antagonism—I hesitate to call it anti-Semitism since it was so little self-conscious or energetic—an underlying stiffness which testified to inherited feeling. In personal intercourse, on the other hand, there was an ease which answered to the relaxed and uncomplicated life of the islanders. It was a latent, not an urgent antagonism. There was a palimpsest quality about it, with the writing of the old received culture clearer than the modern superscription.

It was difficult to espy this highly abstract feeling in the bearing of the local correspondent of the island newspaper. Miss Miriam Hasting's larger design of social exclusiveness seemed to swallow up all the lesser passions. Not that she was more sophisticated than her neighbors; her reportage spoke only in homespun:

"Miss Margaret Wells went to the mainland on Tuesday to do some shopping and returned on Wednesday."

"It was Mrs. Donald Foss, not Mrs. Donald Franklin, who was one of the committee on fancywork at the recent sale held by the Ladies' Aid Society, and her due of the credit should go to her."

But to the constant reader familiar with village affairs, Miss Hasting was unreconstructed 19th century. The famous movie star who owned a pretentiously simple cottage overlooking the Sound seldom succeeded in "crashing" her column. Miss Hasting had not yet come to terms with the stage as a social institution, let alone the motion pictures. It hardly helped that the universally worshipped face stemmed from Boston Irish. Like her island, our correspondent was off the coast of traditional New England.

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Within her inviolate social ramparts, however, Miss Hasting dispensed a broad tolerance, political as well as religious. When I met her I was staying with a friend who is much to the left of center, though not a Communist. But he was born into a sufficiently old New Haven family to make his radicalism not merely pardonable but irrelevant. An aristocrat may indulge an ideological aberration. And the friends of acceptable friends are acceptable. Hence, despite my own mysterious origins, I beat the movie star and made a frequent entry into Miss Hasting's empire under my friend's patrician wing. Few of my doings went unrecorded in the weekly column: a stray picnic, plans for an article, even a short evening call.

To this old lace of social stratification, Mrs. Rebecca Kent added a thread of disingenuous provincialism. She ran a modest shop which displayed stationery, gifts, and a few antique pieces, mostly to summer visitors. She had absented herself from the island only once in twenty-four years, on the exigent occasion of a serious illness. I asked her once, in the manner of the wide-eyed cosmopolite, whether she did not miss the advantages of the mainland.

"Advantages?" she had asked. "And what do they have good on the mainland that we don't have right here on our island?"

Brought up so sharply, I was at a loss. Perhaps she was not so wrong after all; the island was weaving its net around me, too.

Until the last decade or so, Mrs. Kent had had very little contact with Jews, and her image of them was a distillation of ancient and fragile legend. The newer realities puzzled her. One day a Jewish customer had firmly challenged a newspaper bill as far too low. When he had corrected the error, paid, and walked out, Mrs. Kent had turned to another islander and exclaimed:

"Mary! Jews are honest people!"

**M**ORE assured, and also more invidious, was the attitude of Mr. Edward Hornsby, a slight, vandyke-bearded man who owned a large estate named, with an irrevocable finality, "Throughlooking." On this New England island, as perhaps on other islands, the most serious social offense, tantamount to original sin, was "off-islandism." The minimum qualification for membership in the local club was a residence of

fifty years! Poor Mr. Hornsby, who was a very rich man, had invested a mere thirty years in the profession of becoming an islander, and he was no longer young. He would never make it. He seemed a little sad.

Some ten years ago he brought back from the great world, where he spent the harsher winter months, a sophisticated anti-Semitism then current in certain fashionable circles. One evening he arose in town meeting to urge that the villagers agree not to sell or rent property to Jews.

The debate which this proposal provoked was brought to a close by Mrs. Ruth Milton, a huge and outspoken woman who brought all discussions on the island to a close. Her late husband had become extremely popular as the long-suffering victim of a domestic dictatorship. For many years he had indulged a wish to marry an elderly and soft-spoken friend of the family when Mrs. Milton—Heaven forbid—should die. It would be restful.

Mrs. Milton, who had no weaknesses and therefore no jealousy, had walked in sincere sadness to both their funerals.

It was this woman who now looked out over her bosom at Mr. Hornsby and announced that, whatever *others* might do, as for herself she proposed to go right on renting her summer "camps" to whomever she wished, Jews or non-Jews. She remarked, and all her remarks were insistences, that she had found Jews reliable, prompt-paying tenants. She had come to know them, indeed, as very considerate people. With a touch of fresh irrelevance, she concluded that no one had been more surprised than she when she had discovered that she liked Jews. This was the last that was heard of Mr. Hornsby's campaign.

The Cohens were an entirely Christian family who had inherited their name from a solitary Jewish ancestor. It had never occurred to them that family names are changed. Without any self-consciousness, they were articulate about their small ration of Jewish blood. But they shared completely the naive and traditional sentiments of their neighbors. I recall one evening when, at a party where islanders and summer residents mixed freely, as indeed they generally did, a teen-age Cohen sidled up to me and, perhaps by way of innocent ingratiating, informed me that his great-grandfather had

been a Jew. It was gratuitous—I knew it already.

"You see, you can be very frank with me," Cohen said. "Do tell me the *secrets*."

I LEARNED about the scandal involving the preacher quite unexpectedly. I was taking a sailing lesson with an old sailorman, John Wilson, upon whom the community had conferred the courtesy title of Captain. We had just set out from the little cove that served us for a port when he suddenly remarked that it had begun to be suspected that the village preacher was a Jew. My grip on the tiller loosened, and before I knew it our small sloop had veered sharply to port, the sail had spilled the wind, and we were "luffing." I turned the tiller back slowly and, as we caught the wind again, I counted the Captain's next words:

"Of course, it's only a rumor, but it sure has been spreading. Otherwise the new preacher is right popular."

Of course, the Captain meant that the preacher was Jewish by birth or origin.

"Oh no!" said the Captain with a promptness unusual for him. "It isn't what he may have been or what his people were. They say he is Jewish right now."

Was the old sailorman pulling my leg? Was he being sardonic or disingenuous? He knew I was Jewish, or so I had naturally assumed.

My Captain's tone was remotely and vaguely objective, neither especially sympathetic nor latently fanatical—no more than the traditional faint stiffness to my kind. As a matter of fact, he had always been kind to me, and it takes a lot of patience to watch somebody learning how to sail.

Through a huge naval glass from his house on the top of the hill—the view over several bodies of water: ocean, sound, inlet, was, by the way, breathtaking—he surveyed the small and rather safe bay in which I sailed. When the weather was threatening or I was in trouble, he would come down to the shore and, if I were near enough, shout instructions. He was formally correct, alternating "doctor" and "professor" on a certain mysterious plan. He did like to strike a good bargain, but the price always turned out to be ridiculously low, not because I was a better bargainer, but because Captain Wilson liked shrewdness only for its own sake. He

was in his 70's and took out sailing parties largely as an avocation.

I felt quite free to question him about the new preacher. Why had the villagers been so careless as to engage a Jew for a Protestant pulpit? The Captain insisted that they had pursued the usual procedure. Following the death of their old preacher, they had written to the central office of their Church in New York for a recommendation.

I remarked with some impatience that the Church office was hardly likely to go about packing country pulpits with Jews.

"Of course not," the Captain chuckled. "But they say down in the village that our letter may have been delivered to the wrong office, I mean the wrong Church."

Wouldn't the two offices rectify such a mistake? The Captain's face lighted up.

"No error that! They say that some smart fellow in town, maybe of our Church, maybe of another, thought he would play a little joke."

So that was it—the ancient wariness of the city slicker, the fear of having something put over on innocent country folk.

I suggested that they put the whole matter up to Reverend Guldberg himself. Oh no! Goodness gracious, they could never do that! They wouldn't think of exposing him to such unpleasantness. They really thought him a good sort. And suppose the rumor were false: it would embarrass him to be asked such a question. And if it was true, it would embarrass everybody. . . .

Well then, I asked, what *were* the villagers going to do about it?

"I don't know," Captain Wilson drawled. "I guess we'll just set and see."

I SOON had an opportunity to meet and listen to Reverend Guldberg. Though my leftist friend was an unbeliever, he had become so integrated into the community that he attended church quite regularly. The following Sunday, as it chanced, the minister dropped in to dinner, on his way from the other side of the island.

His connection with the church of our village was only one of several. Each Sunday he began by preaching in the crowded port that provided our only link with the mainland. Then he drove his old car to the stark moors of our windswept and isolated corner. Here he held services in the early afternoon

in a tiny, fresh-painted church which was much too large for the parish, and certainly for the church-going part of it. After chatting briefly with the villagers on the green, he returned for a third service in the "thickly-settled" areas, as the rhombic yellow-and-black road signs boasted to the passers-by. There was, I think, a fourth assignment somewhere on the island, but I do not recall how it fitted, or how it could have fitted, into the preacher's schedule.

Yet Reverend Guldberg seemed none the worse for wear. He was a consciously earnest young man in his early or middle 30's, fair-haired and fair-skinned, very broad-shouldered, and almost handsome but for a heaviness of face that portended a future of jowls. He just missed being tall. The conversation turned to politics and the state of the war; it was July of 1944 and the war with Japan was still on. Reverend Guldberg's views stamped him immediately as belonging to the extreme liberal wing of his Church. He seemed to be a good deal more concerned over the human suffering and fierce passions engendered by the war than over political issues.

Perhaps, I thought to myself, it was his leanings toward pacifism, primitive Christianity, and the philosophy of his compatriot Kierkegaard that had been taken for evidence of Judaism. If he ever had been a Jew, which seemed most unlikely both to my radical friend and to myself, he certainly had become a good enough Protestant minister by now.

After a hurried dinner, we accompanied Reverend Guldberg to church. On the way, he stopped to pick up two female parishioners who were waiting at the roadside, apparently by arrangement. At church, I felt an increasing sympathy for the preacher. He was not swaying thousands! Nearly a fourth of the worshipers he had brought with him. Captain Wilson was there to wind the grandfather's clock in the corner and to supply most of the vocal power, while his married daughter played on a small organ. Mrs. Kent, Mrs. Hornsby, Mrs. Milton, and Mrs. Cohen were there.

The small group was not perfectly attentive. I am afraid I noticed that my Captain removed his hearing aid when Reverend Guldberg rose to speak. I myself daydreamed. During earlier years as a newspaperman I

had lost the capacity to listen to any sort of public oratory, a capacity I have fortunately been unable to recover. But remotely I did gather that the preacher dealt with the heights of sacrifice and devotion that human society attains in moments of emergency and disaster. It was as much a secular moral essay as a sermon, and a Jew might just as conveniently have delivered it as a Christian. As Reverend Guldberg was drawing his moral, a pious but late dog strolled up the aisle and stopped to look carefully at him. After considering briefly the grandeur of society in moments of emergency, the dog turned away with dignity and walked noiselessly into the smooth sunshine.

I BEGAN to piece bits together. Reverend Sören Guldberg's name was, of course, untainted Danish. Some too-keen islander, perhaps also a poor speller, had taken it for Goldberg. The preacher's expression and features, for whatever they might be worth in such an issue, lent some possible countenance to the classification. His sermons were so liberal that one parishioner—very likely the same islander—had been moved to breathe the dreaded word "red."

"He doesn't talk much about the war," Captain Wilson had observed, as though that were entirely self-explanatory.

Once suspicion was awake, everybody noticed that the sermons were highly untheological in tone and subject.

None of these considerations was decisive in itself, it is true, but together they contrived to build up a persuasion that, somehow, through some fantastic misunderstanding or chicane, a Jew was holding down a Christian pulpit and preaching unsanctified doctrine from it every Sunday!

But from that point, the islanders were unable to resolve the crisis. On one side, there were the suspicion of the stranger and the unknown, characteristic of the inbred community, and inherited predispositions. But on the other hand, there were the deeper sensibilities and diplomatic hesitations inherent in the situation. Economic stringencies, group competition, and political tensions were alike lacking on this happy island, as was any considerable and compact Jewish settlement. Far away, in the small town, a few Jewish families had settled and fitted inconspicuously into commercial and even

public life. And even on this island, "our" Jews are different. . . .

The result was that the rumor about the preacher, after some weeks of tension, hung fire. The other parishes in which the Reverend Guldberg was serving made no move. I learned from my friend's correspondence that, as the summer wore on, the excitement began to languish for want of fresh nourishment, and particularly of initiative. Not until the following summer did I hear of the sermon that administered the *coup de grâce* to the scandal.

ON THE very first day of my vacation I went to see Captain Wilson about a sloop I intended to rent for the season. I asked him whether Reverend Guldberg was back.

"Oh yes," he replied. "We're glad to have him again. He was very popular, you know. If I remember now, you heard him preach yourself once."

Nothing more.

I reminded him of the Jewish issue.

"Oh that!"

He seemed none too eager to talk about it, but I did not mean to let him off. It came out, slowly, that toward the end of the summer, Reverend Guldberg announced a sermon entitled "Who is a Jew?"

The village was electrified. Did the minister know about the rumor? Was he going to declare himself? On our island local calls are free and unlimited. For a week the telephone wires burned.

For the first time in years the little church was half full.

The preacher began by expressing sympathy with the Jews of Europe. He dilated upon the conventional relations, historic and religious, between Christianity and Judaism.

"I and you, and you, and you," he concluded, pointing dramatically at the worshippers in turn, "all of us are the spiritual descendants of the ancient Jews."

The captain was silent.

I prodded him. How could that settle the matter; how did that sermon prove that the minister was not a Jew?

A shrewd gleam brightened my captain's eye. He looked the sharp enough fellow he thought himself, the fellow no one could take in. He was Tolstoi's Lavrushka—the Cossack who saw "a sharp piece of cunning" in everything that was said.

"He was a smart one, that Reverend Guldberg," he said. "You see, in a way he was saying that maybe he was a Jew. . . . But did he suppose this village was made up of fools? We didn't believe him!"



# CEDARS OF LEBANON

## THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

### *Some Jewish Prayers*

THESE prayers are taken from a collection of verse translations (with the Hebrew, Yiddish, and Aramaic texts on facing pages) which is to be published next month by Schocken Books under the title *The Language of Faith*. Nahum N. Glatzer, editor of the collection, describes it as follows:

"About one half of the selections is from the liturgy of Ashkenazic Jewry. (A few Sephardic prayers have also been included.) The other half consists of private devotions, ranging from the talmudic masters to Nahman of Bratzlav (ca. 1800), the great Hasidic master. The few biblical prayers in this volume have been taken from those which form a part of the synagogue service."

#### Watchman of Israel

*From the Morning Prayer.*

WATCHMAN of Israel,  
watch the remnant of Israel,  
and let Israel not fail,  
who say,  
Hear, O Israel.

Watchman of one people,  
watch the remnant of one people,  
and let not one people fail,  
who one proclaim Thy name,  
Adonai is our God, Adonai is one.

Watchman of a holy people,  
watch the remnant of a holy people,  
and let not a holy people fail,  
who three times holiness do cry,  
Unto the Holy.

The prayers were translated by OLGA MARX and JACOB SLOAN. Of the selections below, "Our Eyes Are Longing For Your Love" and "Who Sets Apart the Sacred and Profane" were translated by Olga Marx, the rest by Jacob Sloan.

*The Language of Faith* is the first volume in the Schocken Library, "a series of volumes planned toward the building up of a comprehensive home library devoted to outstanding expressions of Jewish thought and Jewish experience, ancient and modern." The first five volumes in the series (\$1.50 per volume) are to be published September 2. Later volumes will follow these at the rate of one a month.  
—ED.

#### Our Father, the Father Compassionate

*From the Morning Prayer. This passage is followed by the proclamation of the unity of God ("Hear, O Israel").*

Our Father, the Father compassionate,  
have compassion on us,  
and put it in our heart  
to understand and comprehend,  
to hear, to learn, and to teach,  
to watch, to do,  
and to uphold all the words of thy Torah—  
Study  
lovingly.

And our eyes in thy Torah enlighten,  
and make our heart to thy commandments  
adhere,  
and our heart unite  
to love and to revere thy name.  
And let us never be shamed at all.

**You Are He Who Was***From the Morning Prayer.*

You are He who was  
when the world was not created,  
and you are He who has been  
since the world's creation.

You are He who is  
and you are He  
who shall be for the world-to-be.

Sacred make your name  
through those that sanctify it,  
and sacred make your name  
in this world of yours.  
Then in your salvation may our horn rise  
high!

**Take Pity, Adonai, Our God On Us***A passage from the Grace after Meals. The text follows the Sephardic version.*

TAKE pity, Adonai, our God, on us  
and on Israel, thy folk,  
and on Jerusalem, thy city,  
and on Mount Zion, thy glory's habitation,  
and on the grand and holy house,  
over which thy name is called.  
Our Father, shepherd us,  
feed us, maintain us,  
sustain us, ease us,  
pray ease us speedily from all our pressing  
foes.

Nor let us be needing, Adonai, our God,  
gifts at the hands of flesh-and-blood,  
nor loans at the hands of those  
whose gift is petty, humiliation much;  
but at thy hand  
that is full and broad,  
and rich and open;  
that we be not shamed in this world  
nor disgraced in the other.  
And the kingship of the house of David,  
thine anointed,  
return to its place,  
speedily in our days.

**Our Eyes Are Longing For Your Love**

*Written by Yannai, who lived in Palestine, ca. 600. The work of this predecessor of the liturgical school has been reconstructed from manuscripts in the Schocken Institute for Medieval Hebrew Poetry in Jerusalem by Menahem Zulay. The present poem has as its inspiration Genesis 29:31-32: "The Lord saw that Leah was hated. . . . She said, 'He has looked upon my affliction.'"*

OUR eyes are longing for your love  
Who love those whom their foes do hate.  
Affliction festers in ourselves,  
And foes who hate, strike from without.

Look on us as on Leah, beset with affliction,  
As you looked on the hate that begot her  
affliction:  
Hated within her house,  
And hated without.

Not everyone who is loved, is loved.  
Not everyone who is hated, is hated.  
Some are hated below, and loved above.  
Those you hate are hated, those you love  
are loved.  
Hated we are, for you we love, O Holy!

**Well I Know, Adonai***From a long prayer by Saadia, Gaon of Sura (born 882 in Fayyum, Egypt, died 942 in Sura, Babylonia).*

WELL I know, Adonai,  
I was nought, and thou made me.  
Thou formed and founded me,  
a deed of life and mercy doing with me;  
and thy command my spirit did guard.

Hast allowed me reason, wisdom, and insight;  
of the strength of thy power girded me;  
of thy wealth and honor dowered me;  
and from height to height exalted me,  
until, from day to day advancing,  
thou hast brought me to this hour,  
and to attain this present end.

**Who Sets Apart the Sacred and Profane**

*A free translation of a hymn by Isaac ben Judah ibn Ghayyat (Spain, 11th century).*

WHO sets apart the sacred and profane,  
May He have mercy on our sins, and deign  
To multiply our seed and what we gain,  
Like sand, like stars by night.

The palm spins out her shadow, day has  
waned,  
I call to God who holds me in his hands,  
The watchman said, the morning cometh  
and  
The night—also the night!

Have pity on me, awesome Lord on high,  
and succor me this day, oh, hear my cry,  
This evening when the sun has left the sky,  
In darkness of the night.

I call upon you, God, to help me know  
the path of life that you would have me go,  
to raise me from my lowly state, to show  
Your grace from dawn to night.

Oh, make me clean of my iniquity.  
So none may ask, to vex and sadden me,  
Where is this God who wrought you?  
Where is he  
Whose word is song by night!

For in your hand we are no more than clay!  
Forgive the grave transgression and the  
slight,

And tidings will speed forth from day to  
day,  
Resound from night to night.

**In My Straits I Called to Adonai**

*Jonah's prayer "from out of the fish's belly"  
(Jonah 2:3-10). The book of Jonah is read  
on the Day of Atonement.*

IN MY straits I called to Adonai,  
and he did reply.  
From the belly of the Chasm, I screamed;  
Thou didst heed my voice.

When thou cast me deep into the heart of  
seas,  
when the Torrent surrounded me,  
when all thy breakers and waves  
passed over me—

Then I said, "I am banished from before  
thine eyes."  
Yet shall I look again  
toward thy sacred habitation.

The waters compassed me to the soul,  
the deep surrounded me,  
weeds wrapped round my head—  
when I sank to the ends of the hills,  
the earth, whose bars were about me for-  
ever—  
thou raised me alive out of the Pit,  
Adonai, my God.

# THE STUDY OF MAN

## DIAGNOSING THE GERMAN MALADY

### *The Events that Led Up to the Crime*

SAMUEL J. HURWITZ

IT IS understandable that we should have a flood of books on German history, all bearing the imprint of a kind of compulsive urgency. By common consent the core of the ills that beset our time is Germany. Since Germany has been guilty of every crime but suicide, and balks at that, we demand from history some simple rational explanation to afford us consoling deliverance from the sense of past catastrophe and an ominous future.

But even more practical considerations motivate our interest. If we are to cure Germany, the plague-spot of Europe, we must know the cause of her malady. The key to the answer of "what to do about Germany" depends on our diagnosis of the nature of the German problem, characterized more than eighty years ago by Constantin Frantz, a German publicist, as "the most somber, the most complicated, the most comprehensive problem of all recent history."

Unfortunately, some historians are physicians who announce the prognosis first, and then construct the diagnosis to fit, with little

respect for the facts of the case record. Lord Vansittart is of the school that seems satisfied to offer reiterated allegations as a substitute for historic truth. But, lacking the brazenness of Hitler and Goebbels, he tries to reinforce his repetitive assertions with "historic evidence," and fails where they succeeded. Writing the foreword to a history of Germany by a Pole writing under the very English pen name of W. M. Knight-Patterson (*Germany from Defeat to Conquest*, New York, Macmillan, 1946), Vansittart holds that "everyone who thinks that the Germans are as other people, only misled, is an enemy of other people. . . . Here is the proof and the story." (Whatever the demerits of the book—and it has many—it is better than the thesis of Lord Vansittart's foreword.)

A well-known British historian, F. J. H. Hearnshaw, entitles his story *Germany the Aggressor Throughout the Ages* (New York, Dutton, 1942). To him, Germany is "chronically dangerous" and "easily misguided." Though definitely writing a "war book," Hearnshaw cannot entirely cast off his cloak of learning and understanding, and the result is a medley of fact, fiction, and imprecation. Somewhat similar in tone, if more academic and more substantial, is the work of an American university professor who offers us *The German Record—A Political Portrait* (William Ebenstein, New York, Rinehart, 1945). Professor Ebenstein, who is not without hope that Germany "can change"—if but slowly—rejects, by writing his book, his own counsel on the German problem, namely, "to declare a moratorium of, say, two years, on books, articles, and lectures on the Germans and the problems they present to the world." Of even less value is

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DISCUSSION of the "German problem" has too often been smothered in a mist of understandable emotion, prejudice, and voluble ignorance. SAMUEL J. HURWITZ, who here attempts to rescue the facts of the situation through sober historical analysis, is a member of the Department of History at Brooklyn College. He was born in New York City in 1913 and educated at Brooklyn College and Columbia University. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia in 1946. Dr. Hurwitz has written a book, *State Intervention in Great Britain: A Study of economic control and social response, 1914-1919*, soon to be published.



S. H. Steinberg's *A Short History of Germany* (New York, Macmillan, 1945), an old-fashioned political narrative that substitutes exhortation for explanation.

The president of Hunter College, George N. Shuster, has for many years been concerned with the future of Germany and the world. His *The Germans: An Inquiry and An Estimate* (New York, L. MacVeagh-Dial) was published in 1932; and in 1944, in collaboration with Arnold Bergstraesser, he wrote *Germany: A Short History* (New York, W. W. Norton, 1944). Both works are characterized by a breadth of understanding and humaneness too often lacking in works dealing with Germany. The sickness of which Hitlerism is such a horrible example is seen as not restricted to that country. Yet one may question a diagnosis which assumes (in 1932) that "Dr. Bruening has been nothing short of a godsend to his countrymen and even to us," even though his government "probably ruled against the wishes of the majority of Germans . . . by reason of the police power it was able to marshal." Even in 1944, Bruening is still staunchly defended, and the "basic explanation for the triumph of Hitlerism" is "found not in the realm of rational calculation, economics, for example, but in that of ethical absolutes," although "the conflict between social ideals and economic realities" is admitted.

AN undercurrent of economic ideas, if not realities, influences Wilhelm Ropke's *Die Deutsche Frage* (Ehlenbach-Zürich, Switzerland, 1945). It is in many respects a superior work; much of what Ropke says is valid and relevant: he recognizes the importance of Germany to Europe and the wider significance of National Socialism, as well as the connection between regimentation and proletarianization on the one hand and nationalism and totalitarianism on the other. Ropke is opposed to large-scale industry and monopoly, but his solution appears as impossible as it is archaic: to do away with "regimentation and proletarianization." He wants a confederation of autonomous states with an economic structure that is "pronouncedly anti-collectivist." How to reverse the growth and tendencies of two hundred years of industrialization is not explained. Ropke does face up to the problem of modern production and totalitarianism, of the incidence of an economy which operates mechanically if not automatically; but his attempt to deal with

the problem has about it the earmarks of the incantations of a witch doctor called upon to purge a patient of "evil spirits."

Veit Valentin's *The German People* (New York, Knopf, 1946) is a book as pretentious as it is shallow, full of errors and downright inanities, made all the more glaring by a very awkward translation. More of a chronicle than a history, it is a mere catalogue of names, events, and dates. Valentin's account reminds one of Ambrose Bierce's definition of history as "an account mostly false, of events mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers mostly knaves, and soldiers mostly fools."

Historians, no angels, have not feared to tread, but psychiatrists have rushed in with heavy step.

A practicing psychiatrist, Richard L. Brickner (*Is Germany Incurable?* Philadelphia, Lippincott, 1943), explains the German problem as one of group paranoia. He solemnly tells us that the "deliberate massacre of all Germans is of course intolerable," but offers no other specific remedies. A member of the Department of Psychiatry at Columbia University, David Abrahamsen (*Men, Mind, and Power*, New York, Columbia, 1945), offers us such helpful explanations as the following: "Life in the dark forests affected the thinking of the German tribes; they felt that the woods were full of secret beings who induced fear in the people living there. . . ." The German language is so full of harsh sounds because of "the belief that it was unmanly to talk nicely and smoothly. . . ." "It apparently did not occur to [Hitler] that he was conquering an entire country [Austria] in order to revenge himself on his father. . . ." "If [the Germans] could develop a taste for democracy, then they would be able to want a democracy." The Germans are "materialistic, aggressive, and submissive" and also "romantic, seclusive, and idealistic."

Gerhart Eisler and two collaborators have written *The Lesson of Germany* (New York, International, 1945), "a guide, a modest attempt to interpret the past history of Germany which will enable the reader better to study and understand the future course of the German people in the light of their past." Unfortunately, after the reader has gone more than 200 pages, the authors deny the significance of Germany's past altogether. However, one can hardly quarrel with such a conclusion when it is based on such an account of Germany's past as these authors give.

WE DO not quite turn to the sublime with two other books, but one has real promise; the other represents substantial achievement. The first is *Germany: A Self Portrait* (New York, Oxford, 1944) which Harlen R. Crippen has edited with frequent editorial remarks. His comments alone are worth the price of the book. Though one may quarrel with his selections, my major criticism is not concerned with these, but rather with the fact that the hard-headed Mr. Crippen has been much too close-fisted with his own introductions and editorial remarks. Attacking "bargain-counter racism," he sees the "obscene and criminal Third Reich" as "the manifestation of the profound maladjustments in German society." While his approach is analytical, his mood and style are impressionistic; but some real insights result. His summary of the period before 1914 and his review of conditions between the wars express in a very few pages a terrible indictment of German—and world—society. It is to be hoped that *Germany: A Self Portrait* will be followed by *Germany: A Portrait*.

A distinguished example of historical writing is A. J. Taylor's *The Course of German History* (New York, Coward McCann, 1946). Though it is dogmatic and arrogant, and Taylor's wartime passions and resentments often get the better of his temper and tongue, *The Course of German History* demonstrates that the nature of the German problem rests in the history of the German people, who, like other peoples, have been shaped and influenced by social, economic, and political forces rather than by innate characteristics—racial or otherwise. Nurture, not nature, is the basis of the evil, and Taylor attempts to portray the influences that have shaped Germany and the Germans. He is not always successful, he is often exasperating, and he is sometimes illogical, yet there does emerge from his frequently brilliant pages, as from no other book, the history of Germany, the story of its development.

Significant is the geographical setting. In the center of Europe, Germany lacks geography: without natural frontiers, the German plain is intersected by great rivers that serve to divide, but neither to confine nor protect. Germany is in the center ethnographically as well. The artificiality and impermanence of its frontiers have made it the stamping ground of the peoples of Europe. No study of the "national character" of the Germans can ignore these

influences; yet no serious study can see them as the all-controlling factors.

More important were the great geographical discoveries of the 16th century. In most of Western Europe this was a time of commercial prosperity, of national consolidation, the period of the rise of the modern state. The central location of Germany had made it for a time the highway and the *entrepôt* of world trade. But this very central position was to prove her undoing. The discoveries of the explorers of the 16th century shifted world commerce from land to sea, and thus spelled the decline of Central Europe. The collapse of Germany was inherent in the opening of the Cape route to India. The effects of the Lutheran Reformation only compounded the disastrous consequences.

As was to be true later in 1848, the masses took too literally the words of reform and revolution. Luther, shocked by the Peasants' Revolt of 1525, turned to the princes and bolstered their fading power. The revival of feudal authority was a concomitant of the decline in trade, of the reversion to a more self-contained and stagnant economy; the Lutheran Reformation by strengthening that tendency helped to sunder Germany. Elsewhere in Western Europe, religious changes reinforced national power, but Lutheranism failed to establish itself as the religion of all Germans and thus accentuated disunity.

Sorely burdened, Germany left alone might yet have attained that nationhood achieved by her contemporaries, but the latter, fearing their own weakness as their neighbor became stronger, intervened. The Thirty Years War (1618-48) wasted Germany. The remarkably stable Peace of Westphalia (whose provisions remained generally operative for 150 years) made vested the interest of those who profited by a divided Germany. The result was that the multitudinous German states prospered—in the persons of their princes—while the people languished.

It is not strange that France, Germany's strongest neighbor, always had a profound influence on the course of German history. France prevented German unity in the 17th century; in the 19th she acted as a spur to German unification. In one respect the French Revolution realized the aims of Richelieu—the destruction of the feudal lords and the centralization of power in the national state. But while Richelieu had sought to keep Germany

divided, the French Revolution tended to unite her, even if only against the French. This unity was impossible on any firmer basis because of the lag in commercial and industrial development, and the economic backwardness of the bourgeoisie. There is reality behind the epigram: "The French rule the land, the English the sea, and the Germans the clouds." Napoleon soon defeated the German coalition, but permitted the survival of Prussia.

**B**OLSTERED by the final defeat of France, and jealously guarding their prerogatives, the Prussian and Austrian ruling classes engaged in a campaign against nationalism and liberalism. As Taylor puts it, "the classes that ruled Prussia would dig their own graves provided that they retained a monopoly of wielding the spade." Yet economic necessities could not be ignored. With political unification thwarted, economic cooperation was established by the *Zollverein*. An economic ersatz for political unification, it was not a durable substitute. The revolutionary events of 1848 constituted an attempt to incorporate in political reality the economic facts of German life. The revolutions of 1848, inside and outside of Germany, were essentially middle class. Everywhere industrialism had bred a rising bourgeoisie, discontented and frustrated by the old forms of society, eager for a new world in its own image.

Not wholly successful anywhere, the revolutions of 1848 nevertheless set the stage for further advances everywhere except in Germany. There the fiasco led to disastrous consequences. The lack of success in Austria was just as complete, yet it was not fatal; it was but symptomatic of the industrial backwardness of the huge, sprawling, and incoherent Austrian Empire. Doomed to relative impotence, Austria did not develop the contradictions inherent in the functioning of a modern industrial economy within a feudal state. But for Germany, the failure of the middle class to realize its "rendezvous with destiny"—or at least with history—was to have tragic results.

The revolution was doomed to failure by circumstances beyond the control of any of its participants. The Germans sought to become, and were becoming, like everyone else, but much too late and hence too much. German industrialism was a late growth, vaulting where others grew slowly and integratedly. This belated but sudden growth of industry in Germany had created a working class that was

less *bourgeois* in its outlook than the working class of other countries. Late industrialization had created large units. The small-scale enterprises so characteristic of Great Britain and France, which were the result of a relatively slow process of industrialization, were absent in Germany. Hence the German workers, employed in relatively large-scale establishments, with little hope of ever becoming capitalists themselves, were much more class-conscious than their counterparts in other countries. That more than anything else explains the appearance of a Marx in Germany.

Taylor ignores the reasons, but he is aware of the significance: "... the cause of national union must be adorned with the attractions of socialism. This was the program of Marx and Engels, to which they devoted the rest of their lives, until their national starting-point was almost forgotten. They advocated socialism so as to cause a revolution; only much later did their followers suppose that they had advocated revolution in order to accomplish socialism." On the other hand, it was their fear of socialism that haunted the German middle classes for the next century. And it was the failure of 1848 that robbed them of faith in their own political capacities. The fiasco of '48 and its "proof" of the inherent dangers of political action made the German middle classes not merely tired, but afraid.

While the events of 1848 set the pattern, the crisis of the 1860's in Prussia saw it finally completed. The 1860's were the period of liberalism's great—and, in the light of subsequent events, final—opportunity to seize control of events in Germany. But the Prussian liberals, obsessed by the incubus of 1848, dared not press their advantage. This difficulty of the German bourgeoisie was Bismarck's opportunity, and he exploited it to the full.

**A**LTHOUGH Mr. Taylor brings forth little that is new to the well informed, his portrayal of Bismarck's motives and actions must be much in the nature of a revelation to generations of American college students: Bismarck, his fanciful *Memoirs* notwithstanding, had not the slightest intention of unifying Germany when he assumed office as Prussian Chancellor. Nor did he, at the outset, favor war with Austria. His only program was the preservation of the Junker social order; what he would have most preferred was a return to the age of Metternich. A unified, single

German national state was nowhere in his picture. Events forced his hand. Strength was needed against an Austria that had not given up its own "German policy." With strife inevitable, Bismarck took the initiative. The Seven Weeks War of 1866 eliminated the Austrian bugbear, and the gratitude of the Prussian liberals was unbounded. By a vote of more than three to one, the Prussian parliament forgave Bismarck for his sins against the constitution. Liberalism had not disappeared; it simply disqualified itself as a force in German history. As nothing succeeds like success, the course of German history was now clear. Liberalism had sold its birthright, but for fifty years it had rich porridge.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 was "inevitable": Bismarck had to consolidate his gains; France needed to expiate her inept policies and "solve" her internal problems. The crushing defeat administered to France resolved any doubts about the future of German policy. The constitution of the German Reich, proclaimed not in Germany but in France's Hall of Mirrors in Versailles, reflected the almost fictional character of German unification. A product essentially of the aristocracy, it was a loose confederation rather than a modern constitution based upon centralization of power. It was not a "dictatorship of Prussia" as Taylor dogmatically asserts. Nor is Taylor fully emancipated from the stock version, often repeated by the Germans themselves in a breast-beating mood, of the absolute impotence of the Reichstag (elected, incidentally, by universal manhood suffrage and by secret ballot, whereas in Great Britain, for example, the secret ballot was not attained until 1872 and universal manhood suffrage not until 1918). The Chancellor and the Bundesrat might fume and rant, but the only menace that the Reichstag faced was dissolution, with later re-election if the Reichstag members truly represented the wishes of their constituents. That is not to say that the Reichstag's powers were comparable to those of the British House of Commons or the French Chamber of Deputies: unlike those bodies, the Reichstag had no direct control over the Chancellor and the ministers of state. The distinction is significant, but it should not blur the fact that the Reichstag possessed real power. (Nor should it be overlooked that the growth of cabinet government in Great Britain has tended to curtail the actual powers of the House of Commons.) It is

preposterous to hold that "the government of Germany was as autocratic as the government of Tsarist Russia."

But such extravagant statements do not seriously detract from Taylor's keen analysis of the reasons for the introduction in Germany of direct universal manhood suffrage—opposed by the liberals of the 19th century. Both the liberals and Bismarck anticipated that universal suffrage would swamp the liberals, and their fear was Bismarck's hope. It was precisely because German unification was achieved, at best, with the passive resistance of the liberals, that the fruits of unification were not liberal. The liberals accepted the constitution because it gave them unification—and prosperity. The workers gained the vote—and social legislation.

THE retarded unification of Germany was responsible for the failure of liberalism to take hold. Liberalism was on the wane in Western Europe after 1870, its best assets shrinking, its liabilities ever more apparent. Freedom of the individual, the dignity of man, could not be attained in a social order that thrived on inequality and exploitation. "Liberal" capitalism proved a contradiction in terms, and the faith that gave such spirit and buoyancy to most of the first hundred years after the French Revolution was ebbing. If one date and one event must be taken as the pivotal point, it was the crash of 1873, from which free capitalism never fully recovered. The lag characteristic of social institutions embalmed liberalism in Britain and France. Not perfectly, and even less in France than in Britain, but sufficient unto the day. (To be sure, even Britain showed evidences of strain on the eve of 1914, and the masses, as well as recalcitrant aristocrats who sought in a last desperate gamble to hold on to a show of power, chafed, while the middle class itself was progressively losing its confidence. But the resources of capitalism in Britain were not yet exhausted, and the sense of continuity, the pride of history, helped keep British society relatively well balanced.)

In Germany, the middle classes had in 1848 rejected a unification that carried in it the seeds of democracy and revolution. In the 1860's they were confronted not merely with the possibility but with the fact of a unification that carried with it aristocratic rule. They acquiesced, to their economic glory but to their everlasting social and political humiliation. The formal proclamation of a unified German state



in 1871 left the German middle classes with a sense of inferiority, shame, and guilt—a state of mind from which they never recovered and which their economic success all the more emphasized. Hence their grumbling, but also their restraint in never actually challenging Bismarck's power. They achieved all their demands—except political and social power. To make things easier for them and to insure his own retention of power, Bismarck conjured up specters: France, the Catholics, the Social Democrats—all served, each in its time, to the point of exhaustion. By 1890 dictatorship seemed the only alternative, but the young and ambitious William II dismissed the "Iron Chancellor" and sought to resolve the internal difficulties by winning over the masses to the cause of German glory.

Everywhere in Europe—and in the United States, too—this was the period of imperialism and demagogic chauvinism. The resemblance between Theodore Roosevelt and William II is striking. By 1890 pose had replaced pomp. Bismarck had not lacked either, but William II was even more of a poseur. His policy was the logical continuation of 1871, just as Hitler's policy was the logical continuation of 1890. The dismissal of Bismarck was approved by the Chief of the German General Staff, "who believed that a more demagogic policy would strengthen the army and so enable Germany to take a more forceful line in foreign affairs."

For four years Chancellor Caprivi carried out a policy which, though it was more demagogic than real, proved too strong for the Junkers and National Liberals. Provoking extreme resistance, Caprivi could only remain in power by overthrowing the existing order. For this almost no one was prepared, and Germany returned to a more conservative policy under Hohenlohe and his successors. But it was already too late for that and that alone. A whipping boy had to be found; internal tensions and discontents had to be sublimated if the social order was to remain unchanged. "World Policy"—bluster and alarms—served as the great outlet and distraction. Bismarck's policy, much exaggerated, became the touchstone of success. The French and the British did not neglect to act likewise—but Germany, with internal strife more pronounced, was forced into a position much more exaggerated.

**T**HIS policy lasted a dozen years and broke down in 1906. The failure of the Algeciras

Conference marked the end of successes won by mere threat of force. Ultimately, the decision rested with strength itself, not merely the show of strength. The slogan "the Fatherland is in danger" continued to rally the country, but was becoming ineffectual in foreign affairs. Worse, it helped to make war unavoidable. Crippen best catches the mood: "The crazy zig-zags by which war was several times averted only served to strengthen the popular illusion that war was an illusion. Hairbreadth escapes encouraged the German rulers to engage in further rash enterprises—for bellicose acts and warlike words were usually followed by substantial concessions from other powers. And when thirteen years of the century had passed, the proudest boast of the Hohenzollerns was that there had been no war, and it was implied, there would be none. It was a thin story, but the Germans along with other nations wanted to believe."

As with the liberals, the ubiquitous policy of the "lesser evil" had infected the German Social Democrats, despite their socialist catechisms. The unanimous Reichstag vote for war credits (after 96 out of the 110 Social Democratic deputies had previously, in a secret caucus, decided to support the government) came as a shock to Lenin, but merely proved that Bernstein's plea for a revision of Marxism was a more realistic appraisal of the Social Democratic position in Germany. Mass education, popular suffrage, social insurance, and a standard of living higher than that in any other of the Continental countries had undermined revolutionary ideology. The German worker was a German first and foremost, and the laggards were rallied by the cry that the "Cossacks" would sweep down into Germany. And certainly the German working class did not wish to exchange the Kaiser for the knout.

Though they might differ as to aims, all Germans entered into the war of 1914 with high hopes. But as the war dragged on, unanimity was shattered; as hardships increased, so did discontent. As the home front grew more querulous under the strain of war, and the civilian government more inept, the army was forced to take over real control.

The failure of the German war effort meant the end of army rule. The military leaders were no "die-hards"; they were ready, willing, and anxious to relinquish the reins when they themselves failed. The dispatch with which the government of Germany was transformed

into a democratic republic is more attributable to the consent of the army than the ardent desire of the Social Democrats to assume power.

**S**HUSTER and Bergstraesser are at their best in describing the events of 1918 and 1919. Few really wanted the revolution but "one must not assume that the army command used revolution as a strategic device to transfer blame for the debacle on other shoulders. . . . It had simply lost its nerve." Here, clearly, was a revolutionary situation, the opportunity for revolution so often looked forward to by the Social Democrats. But the Social Democrats and their millions of followers who had laboriously acquired a stake in German society saw in this situation only a threat to their own stability, and proceeded, not to revolution, but to save a society of which they felt themselves to be an integral part. No less than Ebert, who, as he himself said, "hated revolution like sin," the German working class viewed with horror the possibility of revolution—with its expected uprooting and chaos; their abhorrence was made all the greater by the events in Russia. So long as the former ruling class did not press its demands, so long as the German working class achieved its major aims of peace and a democratic political organization, so long was the "revolution" successful and so long was it unnecessary to destroy the former ruling class physically.

As a matter of fact, the Social Democrats could not eliminate the Junkers and their adherents without destroying themselves. For close on the heels of the Social Democratic revolution was the terror of an uprising on the Russian model. And it seemed plain to socialists and democrats, even as early as the end of 1918, that the Russian Revolution was a perversion of socialism. Having no other resources with which to resist the extreme Left, the government established an alliance with the High Command in order to preserve order. The Spartacists, unable to attain their ends by democratic means, preached—and practiced—violence almost as an end in itself. Against their own better judgment their leaders followed the irresponsible crowds—to death and destruction.

The Social Democrats were trade-union leaders, not revolutionaries; they endeavored to preserve the German state and most of its institutions. They sought a democratic regime, the ideal of 1848. And, indeed, the Weimar

Constitution of 1919 was the most democratic constitution ever adopted by any state. All power resided in the people, and there were no "due process of law" clauses to prevent socialization. But neither did it provide for socialism automatically. The German people could have it, but first they must want it, and whether they did or not could be ascertained through the democratic process. Whatever the reason, this they never did. Even in the first post-revolution election, in January, 1919, the Social Democrats did not have a majority, nor would fusion with the more radical socialist groups have given them a majority. And the socialist vote, of every persuasion (the Spartacists, numerically insignificant, "boycotted" the election), reached its high-water mark in the election of January 1919. Never was it possible to achieve socialism in Germany by *parliamentary means*—a fact that has generally been ignored.

If democratic socialism was unachievable, so was reaction impossible without the destruction of the values of those groups in Germany which favored a middle-class republic along much the same lines as did analogous groups in the United States, France, and Great Britain. But the failure of democratic capitalism and the seeming impossibility of democratic socialism catapulted more and more German citizens into the ranks of a party which was bound to no past, and which, rootless and unfettered by coherent principles, could chameleon-like assume the colors of the moment. As rationality and responsibility failed in meeting the problems thrown up by the Great Depression, the party of irrationality and irresponsibility reaped the harvest. For between them, the inflation and the depression destroyed—figuratively if not literally—that class in Germany which has everywhere been the champion of democracy and liberalism.

**T**HERE was an integral and causal connection in the 19th century between the middle class, democracy, and liberalism. The great question of our time is whether this trinity still holds. Karl Marx, who had emphasized the original historical connection between capitalism and liberalism, held not merely that socialism, democracy, and liberalism were compatible, but that their synthesis was inherent and necessary if liberalism was to survive. He became a socialist for the very reason that, as he held, capitalism stifled liberalism. To him socialism was true liberalism, that liberalism

which proclaimed the dignity of the individual as the *sine qua non*.

The failure of the Russian Revolution was chiefly responsible for the German "disenchantment" with socialism; the failure of democratic capitalism created the void in accepted values. National Socialism sought to occupy this vacuum.

The economic crisis that began in 1929 was worldwide, but its effects in Germany were greater than anywhere else. With fewer resources—material and spiritual—to meet the collapse, it is natural that the consequences were more catastrophic. It is true as Taylor says, "there was no reason at all why [the crisis] should justify a nationalistic policy and rearmament . . ." but it did result in just that, and not only in Germany. The question of "justification" is somewhat irrelevant. Wherein Germany differed was not in the policy, but in the degree of its application. Fully and even extravagantly applied, it was the policy of fascism or National Socialism—or totalitarianism.

Because of its previous history and the greater impact of the depression, the road to dictatorship was easier to mark out in Germany than in other countries. But one individual who must bear great responsibility for bringing Germany to the precipice from which there was no return is Chancellor Bruening. (It is ironic that one of our great universities should have made him professor of government.) Beginning in 1930, Bruening followed a method of ruling by emergency decrees—not over the protest of the Reichstag, it is true, but without its consent. This method paralyzed the republic; the policies were fatal. Retrenchment which involved the slashing of wages and social services completed the demoralization of those groups that had still remained loyal to the Republic and that now found it more and more impossible to countenance a state ruled by decrees—decrees, moreover, which served but to complete their economic ruin. Disheartened by the turn of events and having no faith in Communism, the democratic working class had the alternative of acquiescence and apathy, or National Socialism. Whichever they chose, Hitler found the going easy.

The British workers, too, had felt themselves betrayed by MacDonald in 1931, but MacDonald ruled through Parliament, and parliamentary majorities could be changed. Bruening ruled over Parliament and there was nothing to change, short of revolution. In Britain

the middle class still had faith in Parliament and "democracy"; both could be turned to their own cause. Not so in Germany. Only dictatorship could be trusted in time of crisis. Fascism was not unique to Germany but its success was. And it succeeded in Germany because the pre-conditions were there: the breakdown of traditional values, the unwillingness—and perhaps inability—to embrace social revolution, and a literate and desperate population that could accept Caesarism.

For fascism—the negation of individual personality—requires active participation by the many. That is why Italian fascism was such a sham: Mussolini's histrionics may have amused but they never seriously moved the great masses, who could no more "appreciate" and share in fascism than they could in democracy. The aspirations of Italian fascism were beyond Italy's possibilities. A long-suffering, less literate population could not accept—nor could Mussolini successfully fashion, in an economically backward country—that synthesis summed up in the words "National Socialism." In Germany, however, men grasped desperately for meaning, for a philosophy of living that was more consonant with their actual mode of behavior than the democratic liberalism of the 19th century which had failed them in the crucial test. Consequences notwithstanding, men sought a mythology, in the best sense of the word, to synthesize their experience, to organize their values, to make the events of their time intelligible.

THE events in Germany provide the lessons of our time. Do they but adumbrate the future? Whether or not we are our brother's keeper, is his illness our illness? I think it was Dorothy Thompson who remarked some years back that the Jews were like everyone else, only more so. A haunting fear that this may be even more true of the Germans—and an effort to avoid the basic issues thus posed—may explain much in our current thinking about the nature of Germany's past. The malady of our age can be glossed over and even denied if it can be made apparent that the Germans are like no one else and even more so.

If one may paraphrase Mussolini, it is Germany that is now the stinking corpse. Unable to be buried, unable to be ignored, with the smell of its death pervasive, Germany dead seems still to pollute the world as much as Germany living and aggressive. A horrible, if

unvoiced, suspicion that her death rattle may have marked the final agony of Western civilization has focused attention on her as a case history. To prove the uniqueness of Germany, to divorce her from the stream of world history—that, apparently, has become the task. Eagerly and desperately, we have reached out for a formula that would provide a solution for our difficulties without requiring us to recast our lives or our society. The “devil theory” is probably as old as man, and age has not attenuated its appeal.

The significant problem in the study of Germany's past (and present and future) is to recognize that Germany belongs, in its development, to the community of nations. Simply to outlaw Germany by fiat, as so many historians have done, is not only intellectually shallow and invalid; what is worse, it tends to lull us into a false sense of security and prevent even an attempt at a proper remedy.

Any study that is to explain Germany's history as well as our own cannot *a priori* rule out those features which are common to our civilization. That is not to say that Germany's past is exactly like our own, or that of Great Britain, or France—or Russia. The commercial decline of the German states in the 16th century, the Lutheran Reformation, the failure of the revolution of 1848, Bismarck, Versailles, postwar deflation and depression, all played their part in a culmination that was peculiar to Germany. But each of these factors is itself the product of forces that acted on all the Western European countries, influencing them at different times and with different strength. The process of industrialization, for example, operated in all countries, creating, weakening, or strength-

ening groups with special interests and special political drives, and leading to common political configurations.

Germany, if we look at history with the eyes of historic objectivity, is neither “different” nor “the same.” Each country unquestionably has institutions peculiar to itself, products of its special historical development and growth. But the underlying and fundamental unity of the forces which make up our modern civilization forces itself into any analysis which is intended to make more clear the true conditions of our era. The task of the historian—or of anyone else who is concerned with our world—is to present a frame of reference by which we can evaluate similarities and differences. Only then can we judge, for example, whether fascism is generic in modern industrial society, and what institutions (political, social, economic, and cultural—if these can be separated) make society more readily susceptible to the blandishments of those who pretend to ride “the wave of the future.” What must we do to avoid having the bell toll for us?

“A fable agreed upon,” was Napoleon's characterization of history. If the history of Germany cannot quite support the sins of the world, its historiography—history as written—too often now seeks to achieve this purpose. Germany, an outcast in the world, finds its counterpart in Germany an outcast in history. But this is the easy, dangerous way. More objective history will lead to a better understanding of the German case; and that in turn may help us to a deeper, truer understanding of the unsolved problems of the world we live in, and to an avoidance of perils that may lie latent in our own American industrial society.



# LETTERS FROM READERS

## The First Light

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have known Dr. Leo S. Baeck for many years, although I only met him for the first time a few weeks ago. He is a great friend of mine. I read his article, "Why Jews in the World?" [in the June COMMENTARY] with great interest, so great that I read it over and over again. I wish every Jew throughout the world would also read it, and take to heart its message and its challenge. That Dr. Baeck should be able to write it after six years in a Nazi camp is a proof of the extraordinary power of his mind in resisting the crushing weight of calamity and maintaining hope and courage and faith in Israel's future through trust in Israel's God.

No Jew worthy of the name could resist the challenge which Dr. Baeck calls to him. To my mind, it brings the first—or at least the brightest—ray of light which has shown through the black cloud that has hung over Israel since the great persecution began.

R. TRAVERS HERFORD

Chester, England

## The Refugee Contribution

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

What contribution the intellectuals driven to this country by Hitlerism are making and will make cannot be easily answered. That they are actually making an important contribution is not questioned by any American intellectual whose opinion is worth recording. But how much of a contribution? Intellectual achievement is a plant of slow growth, and the emigré intellectuals have been here for too brief a time to bring achievement to full maturity.

I am a member of a small organization, the American Committee for Emigré Scholars, Artists, and Writers. To a certain extent we follow up the work of the late Emergency Committee, but, in the main, we look after types the Emergency Committee passed by as not falling into the category of eminent professors. We are poor as crows, and can make only small grants of \$100 a month for a limited number of months. But we also have a

competent service organization, unpaid except for clerical help, which makes arrangements with publishers, arranges introductions for painters and musicians, and canvasses minor educational institutions for teaching positions. We are ruthlessly selective, and extend our service only where we have good reason to think that the beneficiary is at the point of making a contribution.

In the last three years some two hundred men and women have availed themselves of our assistance. Thus I have had an excellent opportunity to estimate the potential value of a group you never hear of. It is my judgment that this value is great.

We have placed some thirty persons in teaching positions where the institution needed them very much. Forty or fifty manuscripts are well on the way, and more than half have been accepted for publication. These books range widely over the subjects of human interest. They are good, but they will be succeeded by better and better books by the same authors. We could show comparable progress for the painters and musicians.

The professors brought over by the New School, and those maintained for a time by the Emergency Committee, are in a more mature class. That they have made their adaptations well is indicated by the fact that relatively few have been dropped. That they have instituted new tendencies, enriching our thought, is beyond dispute. To take a few instances, Wertheimer's Gestalt Theory is exerting a wide influence upon our teaching of psychology. Ulich is influencing educational theory notably. Kogbetliantz is preparing a text book of mathematics that starts with Einstein instead of with Euclid. I've seen enough of his work to be convinced that when he gets it out the student will be able to go to the heart of modern mathematical thinking, unencumbered by the gropings of early times. Tillich has imported a new and vital note into the teaching of theology. Speier has made important contributions to the theory of propaganda. Lowe has greatly extended our competence to deal with world affairs.

If we could send a group of competent critics from university to university, from one art and music center to another, and could

take the time to find out what these emigré scholars and artists are doing and how they stand with their associates, colleagues, and students, we should have, I am sure, an extremely impressive showing of the gains we have won from this small but highly select addition to our population. And yet, the whole group must be appraised as merely a field of promising young grain, destined to yield a rich harvest when time enough has elapsed for the diffusion of ideas and technique among our native intellectuals. . . .

One may ask, is there any reason for expecting more from the few thousand emigré intellectuals than from an equal number of American intellectuals of parallel training and interests? I do expect more of them. They have labored under handicaps, and intellectualism seems to need handicaps to thrive well.

ALVIN JOHNSON

The New School  
New York City

### F. Scott Fitzgerald

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was struck (I should say stricken) by Milton Hindus' article, "F. Scott Fitzgerald and Literary Anti-Semitism," and surprised at its appearance in the June COMMENTARY. One of COMMENTARY's virtues for me is that, as a Jewish magazine devoted to general cultural issues, it has been able to keep Jewishness (and anti-Semitism) in its place. To encourage the kind of literary discussion whose main question seems to be, "What's in it for Jews?" neither expresses the magazine's customary liberalism nor promotes good criticism. To each his hobbyhorse, certainly; but let it not be Trojan.

Mr. Hindus is so sensitive about his Jewishness that I think he unknowingly read the pages of *The Great Gatsby* from right to left. He finds the characterization of a Jew in the book highly obnoxious, and his article makes more of "the dim Wolfsheim" (Lionel Trilling's phrase) than the book itself does. Mr. Hindus does not take at face value that Wolfsheim's being a Jew is mentioned only in passing: he pounces on that very point as sinister. Mr. Hindus claims that the labeling is insidious: it never seems to have occurred to him that the labeling, beyond its momentary identification, may be thereafter simply irrelevant. Instead, he finds the book, Fitzgerald, and the avant-garde of the 1920's in general, ill-willed towards Jews, and out of his sensitivity he constructs an involved, artificial and petulant thesis about "fashionable anti-Semitism."

The thesis is flimsy at several points. Mr. Hindus says in one place, for example, tracing the sources of "fashionable anti-Semitism," that "the satirist by temperament, because he has little affection for the living human beings around him, is disposed to look with favor upon those who are dead. . . . [That] is why almost every satirist you can think of has been reactionary." Are Erasmus, Cervantes, Molière, Voltaire, Fielding, Shaw (to think of a few) without affection and reactionary? It would be hard to find a clearer example of self-hatred than Mr. Hindus' contention that mostly all the avant-garde writers of the 20's summed up all bad things, all human objects of hatred and fear—"foreigners, intellectuals, scientists"—as Jews.

Mr. Hindus could bring less literal a mind and more sense of humor to his appreciation of *The Great Gatsby*. He seems to feel cheated, for instance, by "the richness . . . of [the] picture of American decay" compared with "the poverty of [the] interpretation of that picture" provided by the book's narrator, Nick. He misses there one of the nicest devices of Fitzgerald's art (even if it were true that Nick's comments are thin). His solemnity and simplicity are evident elsewhere in his description of the essentially "literary quality" of "fashionable anti-Semitism," and in his statistical appreciation of Paul Morand's "joke" (quotation marks are Mr. Hindus') quoted about New York. As for intimations of the symbolic or even allegorical meanings of the story of *Gatsby*, Mr. Hindus might turn with profit to Lionel Trilling's short introduction to the New Classics edition of the book.

Anti-Semitism is serious enough without sparring with windmills about it. I'm afraid the worst thing about "fashionable anti-Semitism" is Mr. Hindus' pains about it. If it does sometimes lead to more virulent forms, those were probably present in the first place, which Mr. Hindus himself allows.

My principal reason, otherwise, for taking issue with Mr. Hindus is because of what he makes of criticism. *The Great Gatsby* we both agree is an excellent novel. Now what is wrong, indeed, for a Jew to ignore anti-Semitism (assuming its presence) "as unimportant in the sum of the entire work"? Who says his "aesthetic enjoyment . . . is soured by [a] drop of vitriol"? It is bad enough for Mr. Hindus to think of me as a Jew "complacent and perhaps stupid" for reacting in the first way, and "unfortunate" for not being "soured" in the second way. (Please, do I have to dislike Wagner, and like Chagall?) Only let him speak for himself, not for me.

Diana Trilling's review for COMMENTARY of *Gentleman's Agreement* and especially her "Liberalism vs. Liberalism" reply to some of the detractors of that review (March and April issues) are instances of criticism on subjects of Jewish interest which Mr. Hindus might examine to his advantage. Frankly, I'm a little worried for the state of the humanities, which we are informed Mr. Hindus teaches, at the College of the University of Chicago.

AARON M. FRANKEL

New York City

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The title "F. Scott Fitzgerald and Literary Anti-Semitism" is a misnomer, proved thus by both the conclusions and physical proportions of Mr. Hindus' article . . . Fitzgerald is discussed with such comparative brevity it is plain he and a highly selective two of his books are used only as a springboard for more important considerations. The quick shift in emphasis to other writers (Eliot, Pound) indicates the weakness of Mr. Hindus' case.

More serious where criticism is concerned is both Mr. Hindus' misunderstanding of *The Last Tycoon* and his gratuitous labeling of Fitzgerald as a "satirist," although I can hardly discuss the latter here.

It is strange that while Mr. Hindus is too quick to condemn Fitzgerald's treatment of the Jew in *The Great Gatsby*, he is blind to the great respect and compassion which Fitzgerald so obviously feels for Monroe Stahr, the Jewish producer, in his last and what promised to be his finest novel. As a temporary student of Fitzgerald, Mr. Hindus should know that the writer strongly identified himself with each of his major characters—Amory Blaine, Jay Gatsby, Dick Diver, Monroe Stahr. "[Gatsby] started out as a man I knew and then changed into myself," he writes in the notebooks. It is safe to claim that the tragic Stahr was the last romantic self-projection of a man and writer aware of his own approaching death.

Monroe Stahr "came here from choice to be with us till the end." And, from choice, till the end Fitzgerald maintained his integrity as artist, his insight as perhaps the most attractive moralist in American letters since *The Great Gatsby* was first published. It is unfair to suggest that Fitzgerald could write of a man like Stahr with anything less than tenderness and humility. *The Last Tycoon* is Fitzgerald's own puzzled but brave tenderness and humility at the bitter end.

ARTHUR ORMONT

New York City

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found it a most illuminating experience to read Mr. Milton Hindus' article on F. Scott Fitzgerald in the June COMMENTARY. It seems to me that his study of literary anti-Semitism is exemplary in its thorough probing and honest presentation, besides furnishing a rich canvas of comparing critical observations.

Mr. Hindus fits the literary anti-Semitism of the 20's into a pattern of romantic reaction, this time against urbanization, with the Jew as the protagonist of that social group that is the most completely urbanized.

Taking Mr. Hindus' article as a starting point, I think it would be interesting to probe into the past, in order to discover whether literary anti-Semitism was always associated with movements of romantic reaction.

I should like to see Mr. Hindus give us some more of what he has to say on the subject.

MARIANNE COLEMAN

New York City

### Kafka the Jew

#### TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

William Phillips' "Great Wall of Criticism" in the June issue of COMMENTARY looked to me like one of the most adequate pieces to appear about Kafka in a long time, especially where it concerned itself with those highly inadequate ones which were lately assembled in *The Kafka Problem*. All the more was I baffled and distressed when Mr. Phillips, immediately after having branded them as "[riding] some personal notion or some half-baked thesis" himself came out with the personal notion and half-baked thesis that "perhaps the oldest distortion is Max Brod's attempt—in a kind of Zionist Emersonianism—to squeeze a Jewish oversoul out of Kafka"; which reads as if Max Brod's interpretation of Kafka had long ago been unmasked and established as a distortion, the only thing still open to doubt being whether it is really the oldest one.

Mr. Phillips, to be sure, has a numerous company in sharply rejecting what Max Brod knows and says about Kafka. There seems to be in this country a general critical tendency to discard Brod's insistence upon Kafka's Jewishness as a sort of sectarian queerness, and it seems particularly outspoken among Jewish critics—obviously as part and parcel of that glorious Jewish attitude which refuses to look at a problem, be it ever so Jewish, from a "merely" Jewish standpoint. This Jewish standpoint, if rightly understood, might easily be the most reliable graduator of any cultural or spiritual situation, and that is nothing

"mere" to it but, on the contrary, quite a catholicity. As a matter of fact, I believe that if something is "good for the Jews," it is usually good for all others, too; but then, it could be that this is just a personal notion and a half-baked thesis of mine.

However, no notion and no thesis should be permitted to be applied to indisputable facts. One needn't, as I did, spend several years in Kafka's home town, Prague, and be, as I was, in close personal touch with Max Brod, in order to know that Brod was Kafka's lifelong and most intimate friend, that Judaism and Zionism were the predominant features of his *Weltanschauung* even before his friendship with Kafka began, and that this friendship could not possibly have developed and endured the way it did, had not Kafka's own attitude toward his Jewishness been a highly positive one, too. Certainly, he otherwise would not have started to learn Hebrew, would not have taken part in Zionist activities, and would not have done and said quite a few other things which he did do and say, and to which numerous letters, diary-entries and recorded utterances bear ample testimony. To present Max Brod, who knew of all this better than anybody else, as a "distorter" of what Kafka really meant and wanted, would appear not only as an entirely unwarranted slur upon his personal and literary integrity, but as a deliberate contradiction to historic evidence. I am sure neither was Mr. Phillips' intention.

Whether or not Kafka's writings are as Jewish as he was is, of course, open to discussion, and whether or not they may be interpreted mainly on Jewish grounds will largely depend upon the interpreter's own approach to the aforementioned "Jewish standpoint." Definitely, however, no "Jewish oversoul" had to be "squeezed out" of Kafka. It was there, and unmistakably so. And some squeezing in of it might do no harm to those who are bent to see in Kafka anything but a Jew, and who'd rather call him a "Czech genius" than a Jewish one. He was about as Czech as a Negro born in New Orleans is French. He was about as Jewish as that Negro is Negro.

FRIEDRICH TORBERG

New York City

### Germany's Guilt

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Paul Massing's article, "Is Every German Guilty?" in the May COMMENTARY with a great deal of enthusiasm. I feel it is one of the most incisive, honest, and courageous analyses of a problem of profound significance that

I have read. I should like to congratulate you on publishing it.

While I was in Germany, in Military Government, I found myself constantly wondering over the same problem. The fact that almost all Germans disclaim individual responsibility does not, in my opinion, warrant the wholesale criticism that they are incorrigible. I think rather it goes to show, as Mr. Massing points out in his article, that most Germans never individually accepted participation in the crimes of the Nazi "machine," and that their disclaimer of guilt is *prima facie* as good evidence as one could wish for that they are not individually morally responsible. Collective guilt is a much more difficult proposition. We are all in part guilty of the crimes against humanity that have been done in the past few years. Collectively the guilt of the German is greater, but it is not of such a different order as to justify a wholesale condemnation of the people, which, as Mr. Massing said, is a kind of totalitarian judgment.

I am inclined to feel that discussions of war guilt are going to prove as fruitless and possibly even as pernicious following World War II as they were after World War I.

ALFRED M. BINGHAM

New York City

### A Correction

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY: . . . .

In my review of *Blessed Is the Match*, by Marie Syrkin, in the July COMMENTARY, I said: "It is significant to me that Miss Syrkin's book was published by the Jewish Publication Society; I do not know whether it was offered to a general publisher, but I suspect that, despite the exciting material it contains, most publishers would have had the reaction that 'the general public doesn't want to read about these things, yet.'"

Since writing this I have learned that Miss Syrkin's book is to be published by Alfred A. Knopf. I am very happy that this is to be done.

MEYER LEVIN

New York City

### A Real Delight

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have been reading COMMENTARY eagerly for some months—I regard it as a first-rate publication, and it is a real delight to see a Jewish publication of this standard.

VICTOR GOLLANCZ

London, England



## BOOKS IN REVIEW

### The Hidden Movie

FROM CALIGARI TO HITLER: A PSYCHOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE GERMAN FILM. By SIEGFRIED KRACAUER. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1947. 361 pp. \$5.00.

MAGIC AND MYTH OF THE MOVIES. By PARKER TYLER. New York, Holt, 1947. 283 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by DAVID T. BAZELON

IN BOTH of these books the primary assumption is made that movies are peculiarly suited to the expression of unconscious tendencies, and that, on analysis, films can be made to reveal mass psychological preoccupations. Also, both authors (but especially Dr. Kracauer) believe further that even the pattern—not only the substance—of the mass mentality can be divined by a subtle, interior investigation of movie plots and action. But here the similarity between the books ends.

The framework of Mr. Tyler's criticism is intensely personal, and his mode of expression is surrealist. Dr. Kracauer, on the other hand, is a scholar, and his investigation exhibits a consistent unity of purpose, which is to depict the conflicts in the German mind that eventuated in Hitler. His study owes its superb form to the diversity of social materials which he uses in its construction.

The thesis of Dr. Kracauer's heavily doc-

It is an aim of this department to encourage discussion of significant issues raised by current books. Good reviewers, we have found, have independent judgment and often fresh points of view, and we afford them wide latitude for the expression of their individual opinions. (That these opinions may or may not be in accord with the opinions of the editors hardly needs mentioning.) We welcome the expression of views by authors and readers that differ from those expressed here, and we provide ample space for such discussion.

umented work is that the German film under the Weimar Republic exhibited a consistent concern with a duality which he identifies variously as tyranny-chaos, submission-rebellion, etc., etc. Under the stress of this concern, which was produced by a political impasse and consequent social deterioration, the German mind as pictured in the films showed a psychological regression. That is, there was a decreasing degree of willingness and capacity to seek a realistic social solution of personal problems. Dr. Kracauer asserts that a concept of genuine freedom was never presented on the German screen, although there was manifest a tendency groping toward such a solution.

After outlining the small beginnings of the German film, and the impetus given to the industry by the needs of the First World War, Dr. Kracauer divides the period 1918-1933 into three sections. The character of the first or postwar period, extending from 1918 to 1924, was determined by Germany's isolation from the rest of the world, the short-lived burst of freedom of the German "revolution," and the devastating inflation. The middle class retreated into a psychological shell, which was mirrored adequately by the studio-produced fantasies of the time. The early works of Fritz Lang and the unique *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* are examples. From 1924 to 1929 the German cinema reversed itself completely, becoming just as much externalized as formerly it had been internalized. The chief figure of this stabilization period was G. W. Pabst, whose realistic technique owed much to the early Russian films of Eisenstein and Pudovkin. The deeper themes of the postwar period became more veiled and distorted, but did not disappear, in the realistic productions of this second period. With the help of the Dawes Plan, German trade had revived; the face of reality became more attractive. But it was a false prosperity—nothing really had been resolved.

The economic collapse of 1929 set the stage for the last act of the Weimar Republic. The cinema of the immediate pre-Hitler period (1930-1933) showed a growth of purely es-

capist productions and of an unreal optimism more or less alien to Germany. But there were also direct manifestations of the approaching denouement. The paralysis of the stabilized period dissolved: "As in the postwar period, the German screen became a battleground of conflicting inner tendencies." There were films of pro-Nazi tendency, and there were even Communist films such as *Kuhle Wampe*. But in the end, authoritarian leanings and other aspects of psychological retrogression won out. "The impact of pro-Nazi dispositions seemed to upset all sober considerations." Especially the sober platitudes of the Social Democrats, which "lacked the support of strong emotions." And once Hitler was in power, the fictive characters that had dominated the Weimar screen began to emerge in actual life itself.

The most impressive aspect of Dr. Kracauer's book is his method. *From Caligari to Hitler* contains a history of the film industry and constant references to the objective political and historical events taking place in German society as well as careful analysis of the thematic material and recurrent symbols of the German film. While by no means ignoring aesthetic values—in which the German film of that period was relatively prodigal—Dr. Kracauer's main emphasis is consistently social and psychological, and the result is a superbly well-rounded work, extremely provocative and rewarding. Even more than the actual history itself, the method employed will be of great value to American students of the movies. (Included in the volume is the author's widely remarked monograph, "Propaganda and the Nazi War Film," published in 1942 by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library.)

It is method that also affords the most pertinent point of comparison between Dr. Kracauer's book and Parker Tyler's *Magic and Myth of the Movies*. Method, and also the fact that one writer has described, with systematic thoroughness, the cinema of a German society that no longer exists, while the other gives us occasionally brilliant impressions of the movie-mill of an American society that has not yet fully come into being. Mr. Tyler's criticism is valuable exclusively for its brilliant sparks of insight, its occasional poetry, its often amazing suggestiveness. That is because he does not write within a framework of objective fact. He is, as a matter of fact, forever writing a drama of critical self-consciousness. (He concludes the

present volume with a recapitulation of its critical content, which he forces into the senseless mold of a "Scenario for a Comedy of Critical Hallucination"—an exhibition quite embarrassing to any reader more interested in the movies than in Parker Tyler.)

In his first, very brilliant book, *The Hollywood Hallucination* (1944), Mr. Tyler's psychoanalytic-surrealist approach paid huge dividends; the book contained so much inspiration and poetry that it really could not have been other than it was. But it seemed apparent that if he was to write a sequel, his work would have to move in the direction of a broader system of reference. Mr. Tyler himself was aware of this, and his effort in the present book is to relate his insights to the magic and myth of primitives, especially as described by Sir James Frazer. But all this adds very little enlightenment, and anyhow was implicit in the first book. He should have moved toward greater social relevance.

Instead, Mr. Tyler has moved away from it. Nothing could illustrate this better than his shockingly bad analysis of *The Grapes of Wrath*, under the cute chapter-title of "Mirage of the Sunken Bath tub." When he points out that a motive in the plot is a desire on the part of the underprivileged principals for cleanliness and modern plumbing, he is not incorrect; but he is off the mark to a fantastic degree when he uses this motive as a key to the whole movie and, by inference, to the struggle of dispossessed classes. Such cynicism is not even amusing. And it reveals only too well the manner of his use of psychoanalytic terms.

This manner is somewhat more fruitful, however, in the analyses of *Mildred Pierce*, *Double Indemnity* and—especially—*Arsenic and Old Lace*. Mr. Tyler also catches certain essential psychoanalytic qualities in his dissection of war films, but here again aspects of a nervous system are substituted for an entire body. And in a section saucily labeled "Schizophrenia à la Mode," his loosely held psychiatric terms get completely out of hand and write a chapter all by themselves. The piece called "Supernaturalism at Home," in which he attempts to demonstrate the other-worldly meanings of many movies, is not so much right or wrong as simply dull. It shows, once and for all, I believe, that Freudianism, and the understanding of myth derived from it, explains poorly any phenomenon *when used in isolation*. Mr. Tyler does something that Freud never

did, that is, he substitutes the dream—in this case, movies—for life itself. Which is only to fall victim to the intention of Hollywood, since the heart of the movies as a social phenomenon consists in their great technical capacity for furthering the dissociation of dream from purpose (which dissociation industrial society itself creates). Whoever concentrates on dream-desires in isolation from actuality simply recapitulates in reverse the basic maladjustment of our society—which is that our process of social and intellectual “growth” slowly but inevitably denudes the real world of imaginative (or dream) elements. These latter then lead a disembodied existence of their own, of which the movies are the chief objectification.

It is well known that actual life requires a purpose; it is not so widely understood that one does not live without dreams. The human being persists in dreaming no matter what his condition may be. But his condition is most satisfactory when his dreams are allied with his real-life interests. Without this interactive alliance between dream and purpose, we are forced to divide ourselves and live in two worlds that are more or less disconnected. And our creativity is severely limited. The consequence is the pursuit of purposes that are not informed by and do not satisfy our dreams, and on the other hand the acceptance of dreams we can never realize: thus the atomized, passive individual of our day.

When Mr. Tyler subscribes to a “theory of meaning as essence rather than as form,” he accepts the purposeless dream and invites a cloud of meaninglessness to settle over actuality, since genuine meaning is created not by essence or form, but by the dream-essence objectifying itself in the form of a realistic purpose. Dr. Kracauer, however—the German catastrophe notwithstanding—is willing to wait and hope, to analyze and to plan for a new organization of dream elements that will restore an acceptable emotional purpose to life. No other kind of purpose will do.

The greatest crime of bourgeois society is that it raises its children to believe that nothing remains left over to contend with when the compromises of “adjustment” are made. We grow up unprepared to deal with our unactualized dream-desires, which are fully as much a part of our lives as the career success we achieve by our compromises. In some form or other, our dreams are forever with us. It is Dr. Kracauer’s thesis that failure to deal with

this fact may lead to the transformation of the actual world into a fascist nightmare.

### Failure of a Mission

BEHIND THE SILKEN CURTAIN. By BARTLEY C. CRUM. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1947. 297 pp. \$2.75.

PALESTINE MISSION: A PERSONAL RECORD. By RICHARD CROSSMAN. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1947. 210 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by SIDNEY HERTZBERG

BOTH authors were members of the Anglo-American Committee on Palestine and both books consist of their reactions to the Committee’s hearings and investigations in Washington, London, Europe, Cairo, and Palestine in the winter of 1945-46.

Read together, they provide a fascinating study of the comparative status of the British and American political mind. Crossman and Crum were the youngest members of the Committee. They are both political mavericks and their credentials as mavericks reveal the contrast between British and American political development. Crossman is a left-wing socialist in a country in which the socialists hold full power. His dissidence consists in goading the Labor cabinet into adopting a full-blooded socialist foreign policy. Crum is a Willkie Republican turned Roosevelt Democrat in a country in which neither holds power. He thinks he is a pretty wild fellow because he was active in “Fight for Freedom” and is against discrimination and Franco. Crossman is a scholar and writer, a Labor M. P., and an editor of the *New Statesman*. The world and its problems are nothing new to him. He approaches them with a coherent political philosophy and a sophisticated and analytical mind. Crum is a corporation lawyer. He apparently believes that Wendell Willkie discovered the fact that it was one world. He approaches this world with emotional good will, overwhelming indignation, moralistic attitudinizing, and virtually no coordination.

When it was suggested in Palestine that the co-chairmen of the Anglo-American Committee visit King Ibn Saud to make it clear that the Committee members were not enemies of the Arabs, Crum noted in his diary: “I don’t

see Ibn Saud's right to be consulted on this matter." The note exemplified a certain confusion about the meaning of One World, considering that it was made by a Roman Catholic resident of California who had never before been outside the United States and who never betrayed the slightest doubt about his own right to be consulted on the matter.

Both men mention their reactions to each other. Of Crossman, Crum writes: "There are persons with whom you feel *en rapport* at once. So it was with Dick Crossman and myself." Crossman, he adds, "had a gift for striking quickly at the nub of complicated questions." Crossman may have been overly cynical in using this gift. Crum, says Crossman, "was more keenly aware than any of his colleagues of the domestic issues involved in our investigation. Indeed, he was the only American with us who had a political career in front of him which could be made or marred by the attitude he adopted toward the Jewish question."

Crum is for partition and for a long list of Zionist immediate demands. But he does not undertake to argue for partition in his book, and in his recent speeches he seems to have changed his mind about it. Crum talks about supporting progressive forces in the Middle East and raising the standards of living for all. But the talk has no substance. It is little more than a set of slogans, without relation to his specific demands for Palestine or his general view of the world picture. This view is standard One-World know-nothingism. "Surely," Crum writes, "the United States and Russia had few points at which their basic interests were in conflict."

Stripped of its efforts at sensationalism, Crum's book has some value as the Odyssey of a naive Zionist sympathizer whose heart is in the right place. The most striking section of the book is not Crum's at all. It is the testimony of Dr. Zalman Grinberg, chairman of the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Munich. Dr. Grinberg's explanation of the psychological compulsions driving refugees to Palestine is a triumph of somber eloquence.

The melodramatic title of Crum's book and the publisher's promotion compel some attention to the "sensations" lying behind the silken curtain. There aren't any. There is only the inescapable impression that Crum thought of himself as the hero of a Sax Rohmer mystery story. He is always being spied upon. Sinister British agents with names like Beeley are al-

ways thwarting his noble efforts. He is indignant over the discovery that foreign office and State Department officials have opinions. (The opinions were not the same as his.) He is endlessly amazed and preoccupied with the superficial skull-duggery of international politics. He is also indignant about more fundamental abuses. But one tires of indignation. At some point it must give way to an effort to understand why these things are so.

Crum's major revelation is a State Department file of correspondence with Arab officials. These letters prove conclusively that the State Department has been scrupulously carrying out the two-faced policy in the Near East established by Franklin D. Roosevelt and known since the publication of his correspondence with Ibn Saud. But Crum's scorn is reserved for the underlings. It simply has never been proved, and certainly not by Crum, that American presidents and secretaries of state are the helpless dupes of sinister sub-officials in the State Department.

THE Zionists have a case that deserves the scrutiny of clearer minds than Bartley Crum's. They could not ask for a keener analysis than Richard Crossman's. While Crum's book is essentially a piece of political pulp-writing, Crossman pays the Zionists the compliment of a frank and searching analysis of their case. Crossman is, if anything, more aware than Crum of the villainies of international diplomacy, but, unlike Crum, he undertakes to get at their underlying causes.

Crossman was antagonized by American Zionists. In Washington, he felt that they were making "totalitarian claims," and overstating their case. "Jewish argumentation was stimulating the anti-Semitic bacilli which breed in every Gentile's unconscious," he writes. But Palestinian Zionists, he felt, "belonged to a completely different world from that of the American Zionists." Under the circumstances, Crossman may be excused for overestimating the degree of support in the United States for Zionism. However, he offers an interesting explanation of American support for Zionism. America's frontier mentality, he says, results in natural sympathy for the Zionist pioneers. Other things being equal, he feels, Americans "will always give their sympathy to the pioneer and suspect an empire which thwarts the white settler in the name of native rights." On the other hand, the



Briton, who has lived in the same district for nearly a thousand years, is instinctively sympathetic to the Arab.

In view of the tendency among some Americans to regard the Arab as a hopeless lot, Crossman's chapter on Cairo must be singled out for special recommendation. It is a brilliant commentary on the social forces at work in the Arab scene, and the dilemma of the Arab intellectual. It contains also a bitter-sweet picture of the British colonial mind in operation.

Though Crossman, like Crum, signed the unanimous report of the Anglo-American Committee which included the conclusion that Palestine must never become a Christian, Jewish, or Arab state, Crossman is personally in favor of partition. But his argument for partition, the most realistic and closely reasoned I have seen, offers little comfort to Zionist propagandists. Crossman's case is based on a compromise with reality which, he admits, will repel many progressives. It is idle to deny the existence of the Jewish problem, and this problem seems to be insoluble, he says. Certainly in Central and Eastern Europe, Hitler has made it impossible for most self-respecting Jews to rebuild their lives simply as members of a religious community in the countries where they were born. This, he admits, is a victory for Hitler.

In the modern world, survival is possible only through the nation-state. But a Jewish state, he says, will neither solve the Jewish problem nor reduce anti-Semitism. It will be some kind of solution only for the "tiny minority of Jews" who actually go to Palestine. The anti-Zionist Jews are right, he says, in feeling that a Jewish state would be an added menace to the security of the vast majority of Jews who would remain citizens of other states. And the pro-Zionist Jew is greatly mistaken in claiming that he has found the solution "when he is really formulating the 20th-century adaptation of Jewry to a hostile world."

The Jewish state as seen by Crossman will grow into the life of the Middle East and grow away from its present dependence on the West. "Within two generations, the Jews of Britain and America will feel far more spiritual kinship with their Gentile neighbors than with the Jewish commonwealth."

A partitioned Jewish state, then, is a makeshift for some Jews. What kind of solution is it in terms of the total Middle East problem? It is, says Crossman, an unjust solution for

both Jews and Arabs. He admits it would have to be imposed. But he specifies that it cannot be an isolated act. It must be combined with large-scale Anglo-American assistance to both the Jewish commonwealth and the surrounding Arab states. He sees it as a lesser injustice to the Arabs because he believes that the Jews have set going revolutionary forces in the Middle East which can benefit the Arabs in the long run. He would not have reached this conclusion "if the national home had merely been a national home." It is also a socialist commonwealth, and as such it will have an influence, disproportionate to its size, in accelerating the downfall of the present medieval social order. In other words, more than partition is necessary. To make it palatable, British policy in the Middle East must be reshaped to offer the Arabs "a democratic and socialist alternative to Communist revolution."

It is in this context that Crossman's advocacy of partition must be considered. Here he seems to be contradictory. Partition, he admits, is an essentially negative and unprogressive solution. It is based on a realistic acceptance of conditions that are inimical to socialism. Yet partition is acceptable to Crossman only on the basis of a socialist solution in the whole Middle East. But if Crossman's partition is realism in terms of the Jewish problem, the precondition for its success, namely socialism in the Middle East, is certainly not realism. Do we not then have a realistic solution based on an unreal framework? If a non-partitioned, socialist, unitary independent state in Palestine must be rejected as unrealistic, should not a reorientation of Anglo-American policy in the Middle East along socialist lines also be rejected as unrealistic? But if such a reorientation is a possibility, why bother with partition? Why not separate Zionist socialism from Zionist nationalism? Crossman himself reports that the most progressive Arabs are also the most intensely nationalist in the sense of opposition to the British and the Zionists. Since any solution would have to be imposed, why impose one that would offend most deeply the comparatively progressive Arabs whose support would be essential in developing democratic socialism in the Middle East? Socialism will come ill-recommended to the Arab world if it arrives via a partitioned Jewish state forcibly imposed by Hagana plus British or United States armies. It would mean that the revolutionary dynamic that Crossman sees the

Zionists bringing to the Middle East would be isolated. Partition might satisfy the ambitions of the Hashemite architects of a greater Syria, but these are not the Arabs with whom the socialist Zionists can work to build a socialist Middle East. And in the Yishuv, partition would be a blow to the socialist Zionists who have done most toward an Arab-Zionist rapprochement.

In the end, says Crossman, the fate of Jews and of the British Commonwealth is the same. This fate "is bound up with the success or failure of the United Nations." At another point he says that "the real basis for British survival would have to be the conciliation of Russia and America." This must be considered in the light of his contention that the success of the democratic socialist alternative is the world's only hope. Here another contradiction seems to have crept in.

If survival depends on Soviet-American conciliation, then the building up of a socialist alternative to Communism must be ruled out. It is obviously no way to conciliate the Soviets. Communist opposition to socialism as the basic enemy has never changed. Communist tactics toward the socialists may involve the united front in some nations and murder in others, but in both cases the long-term objective is the destruction of democratic socialism. The Soviet Union is more likely to go to war against a democratic socialist world than against a capitalist world, which it believes will disintegrate anyway. The trouble is that Crossman's realization that democratic socialism is the only real answer to Communism is a realization shared by the Communists.

### The Art of Exhaustion

SEEDTIME. By LEO KATZ. New York, Knopf, 1947. 381 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by IRVING HOWE

*Seedtime* is a parable of passivity. Its plot is tangential to a sequence of events which dominate and loom over it: a Rumanian peasant rebellion in 1907 spurred by the most terrible misery but soon suppressed by the regime of the boyars. This rebellion coincides with the proclamation of universal suffrage by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, a concession forced by the Viennese workers. The two events mesh: the Rumanian authorities try to deflect the peasants into pogroms and some Austrian officials

hope to intervene "in behalf of the Jews" as a means of winning international acclaim for the Dual Monarchy. But both pogroms and intervention are forestalled by considerations of international politics, as well as by some novelistic devices contributed by Mr. Katz.

Against this sequence of events from without, the little town of Sereth, on the border between Austria-Hungary and Rumania, is helpless. Its predominantly Jewish population lies passive, aware that it is merely a pawn but hoping somehow again to squirm out of danger. That in this instance the pogrom is aborted is not crucial; the pattern of pogroms—of, so to speak, the pogrom-as-such of modern society—is accepted by the Jews as given. How the petty officials, the Jews, and some Rumanian peasants react to these events, when *things happen to them*, is the core of the novel.

I may as well say bluntly that this seems to me a bad and confused novel. Yet it raises certain interesting questions about the general state of the modern novel as well as offering still another comment on the situation of Europe's Jews. One is not merely indifferent to this sort of bad novel. One *cares*; one suspects that an explanation of its failure may be of larger significance than the book itself.

*Seedtime* is a novel of literary echoes. The peasant scenes recall Gorky, but without his generous rebellious passion; the Jewish genre scenes recall Sholom Aleichem, but without his universal comic grasp which involved not merely eyes and ears but a first-rate mind as well; and the burlesque of petty officialdom recalls Hasek, but without his special gift for logical inventiveness which made logic itself seem ridiculous and bare as bleached bones. In a word, Katz does not merely place his story in 1907; his novel is a pale reflection of the literary consciousness of 1907. For a contemporary reader, this makes for an unsatisfactory novel; the tensions, the ambiguities, the modes of perception—many of the ideas that are distended by the Existentialists into universal human attributes—which we expect in a modern novel, are absent from *Seedtime*. We feel that a writer cannot regress to a simplicity of means and vision involving a rejection of contemporary attitudes without risking the loss of relevant communicability—not merely to this critic, but to most thoughtful readers of our day.

However, *Seedtime* must be judged a bad novel on more obvious grounds. It contains a

mass of material sufficient for several novels, but the author's curious creative inertia seems to prevent him from selecting what he considers central and what is to be subordinate. Without directed emphasis, there is no art; for then the material is merely lumped together, not shaped into a form. That is why the novel's potentially interesting characters are never realized—Mr. Katz is too busy juggling the unwieldy apparatus of his too complex plot to give it centrality and direction. His novel is like an army forever maneuvering but never going into battle.

Hence its dominant tone: a weariness that suggests the quality of automatic writing, as if the product of some extraneous compulsion rather than an inner creativity. It is as if the material were given, antecedent to the writer's attention, and he merely funneled it, disorganized and disintegrated, through his neutral style. Since he does not mold his material, the author exists parallel to rather than in interaction with it. This absence of the strong creative personality—the *maker*, transforming experience into art—gives the writer a curious distance from his work.

As a comment on the plight of Europe's Jews, Katz' concept of the Jew as passive victim is ultimately justified, though I suspect one may question it as a specific description of the Austrian Jews of 1907. His implicit suggestion that the Jews should have allied themselves with the rebellious peasants is acceptable in general, but allows him too easy an out as novelist. For his peasants don't react to anti-Semitism; his peasant leader sagaciously rejects it as a diversion from the true goals of the rebellion. In *Seedtime* anti-Semitism is mainly a policy manipulated by government agents. No doubt it was that, no doubt it was directly planned; but such planning was possible only because its initiators could tap the anti-Semitism rooted in the East European peasant's consciousness since childhood. Had Mr. Katz explored the more difficult problem of the indigenous subterranean anti-Semitism of the masses, in addition to viewing it as a mere provocation of reactionary politicians, he would have had a more vital and dramatically tense subject. What would have happened if they had acted on the traditional identification of the Jew with the bourgeoisie? That would have been a real nut to crack.

Since this review has been so speculative, I shall close it with yet another speculation. One

wonders to what degree *Seedtime's* novelistic and intellectual weariness is the result of a catatonic numbness in the face of the experience of the European Jews since 1907. From 1907 to 1947—only forty years, but a different world; seldom has history been bent into such a twisted arc. One wonders if the contemporary imagination can span that distance.

### How Did Spinoza Look?

THE FACE OF BENEDICTUS SPINOZA. By SIMON L. MILLNER. New York, Machmadim Art Editions, 1946. 51 pp., 42 pl. \$7.50.

Reviewed by MEYER SCHAPIRO

WHAT did Spinoza look like? Will we ever know? In a French novel of the end of the last century, Thomas Edison, meditating his inventions, regrets that the phonograph and the movie camera did not exist when there were really great voices and spectacles to record. In a similar vein, Kierkegaard had observed that photography appeared at a time when people were beginning to look more and more alike. Several portraits of Spinoza survive, but since none of them is well documented and they differ enormously, the task of discovering his true face is a difficult job; it ends in doubt and also in dismay at the credulity which has accepted as genuine the images of a face wholly devoid of the qualities that radiate from the writings.

According to his biographer, Colerus, Spinoza had drawn himself in his sketchbook as a fisherman after an image of the Neapolitan Masaniello, the leader of a popular rebellion who was ultimately the victim of a mob. Spinoza's landlord, an artist, told Colerus that this drawing resembled Spinoza to a hair. The philosopher's feeling of kinship with the fisherman is a remarkable fact that deserves more attention than Spinoza students, including the author of this book, have given it.

Earlier in the century, Italian painters (Caravaggio, Allori) were said to have portrayed themselves in the decapitated heads of Goliath and Holofernes; in Holland, the excommunicated Jew identified himself with an Italian rebel. The affinity had perhaps a personal political significance, the Neapolitan uprising having been directed against Spain, like the contemporary Dutch war for inde-

pendence, and the fate of the plebeian leader recalling the murder of Spinoza's friend and patron, Jan de Witt, by his political opponents in Amsterdam. The philosopher was so deeply aroused by this crime that he prepared to denounce the murderers publicly and was restrained only by the firmness of his landlord, who would not permit him to leave the house in order to post the declaration.

Spinoza's sketchbook, which Colerus had in his hands, has disappeared, but a contemporary Dutch engraving of Masaniello survives and there is in his features a vague resemblance, more physical than physiognomic, to the portrait of Spinoza on the title-page of an early posthumous edition of his works. This engraved image seems to have been copied from a painting of Spinoza now in the Wolfenbuettel library. From these two works, which, of all the pictures of Spinoza, have the most likelihood of veracity, come many of the later portraits. A German student, Ernst Altkirch, who published a detailed study of the Spinoza portraits in 1913, accepted a number of other works as pictures of the philosopher, but his views cannot withstand criticism.

Mr. Millner wishes to prove that we have other equally reliable portraits. He believes that Rembrandt, who lived on the next block from Spinoza's, and whose interest in Jews, amounting to a spiritual kinship, must have brought him into contact with the philosopher, represented him in two pictures. He discovers the young Spinoza, just expelled from the synagogue, in the David playing the harp for Saul in Rembrandt's painting in the Hague. It would be pleasant to believe this, if we had no constraining evidence. But the picture was painted more probably in the 1660's, when Spinoza was in his thirties, than in 1657 as Mr. Millner asserts without giving his reasons. That is the opinion of Rembrandt students, whose judgment should at least have been mentioned and refuted. It must be said also that very little in the appearance of the dark, curly-haired boy, attentive to his music, suggests the independent philosopher. The idea that a painter with Rembrandt's understanding would picture Spinoza in this role seems to me a fantasy of modern novelistic biography. We are struck by the wonderful coincidence, brought out by Mr. Millner, that Rembrandt, entangled in debts, was declared bankrupt on the same day (or was it the day before?) that the young Spinoza was excom-

municated from the synagogue. Such things might happen in the same town at the same instant to its greatest artist and its greatest philosopher; but we think it still less likely that Rembrandt then painted his fellow victim in the guise of David before Saul.

The other Rembrandt portrait, *The Man with the Lens*, in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, has been identified once before as Spinoza. Here again the evidence is of the flimsiest kind. It is true, Spinoza was a lens grinder, but if this is Spinoza, then the Wolfenbuettel portrait and the publisher's engraving are of another and quite different man.

In the more questionable pictures claimed as Spinoza, Mr. Millner tries to establish the identity through an esoteric diagnosis of the features. The more doubtful and difficult the attribution, the more profound and mysterious the evidence. When we look at a portrait by van Hoogstraaten of a personality without distinction and read that it depicts a man that "can fully live up to our estimate of Spinoza," we feel deceived; either portraiture is a phoney art, or physiognomics. . . . Perhaps these are subtleties in which divination is necessarily personal and untransmittable and yet may be right. But in one instance, where the insight is supported by argument, the author's reasoning and method are obviously wrong. He tells us that a painting in which the subject wears the costume of the 16th century might nevertheless be of Spinoza because as a young Portuguese Jew the philosopher would be inclined to old fashions in clothes (although his costume is strictly contemporary in the other portraits); and that if the face shows little of Spinoza's mind and has no convincing resemblance to the better-founded images, yet "it could represent Spinoza's matchless inquisitive agility before it had deepened into precision and profundity." Unhappily, the style of the painting, like the costume, is of the 16th century, to judge from the photograph.

However, it is interesting to look through the forty-two plates of Spinoza pictures to learn what artists have made of the man whom they have never seen, but imagined through his noble or ignoble reputation and the stock portraits inherited from the past. A few modern artists have perhaps read Spinoza; their attempts to picture the philosopher suffer either from a lack of art or from a shallow conception of the necessary facial qualities of



so rare and superior a being, or they belong to a more recent time when portraiture has lost its importance and when the strongest devices of expression in art have been dissociated from the probing representation of the human face.

This album, drawn partly from the late Adolph S. Oke's collection of Spinoza documents, makes no pretense to completeness, and one can hardly reproach the author for omitting several portraits that he has described in his text. But almost half the illustrations are not even mentioned there, and we are left to wonder why certain ones have been chosen at all. The list of plates at the end is an odd compilation with enigmatic allusions to sources and with careless, insufficient notes. The text contains no reference to the plates and there is no index. Although the book is on some points more critical than the one published by Altkirch, who brought together the essential material, it is inferior as a scholarly work.

### Realism and Sociology

THE CHILDREN. BY HOWARD FAST.  
New York, Duell, Sloan & Pearce,  
1947. 190 pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ALISON LURIE

CURIOSITY always undermines my resolution never to read authors' prefaces and I turn back to learn that Maisie symbolizes the petty bourgeoisie or that Herbert stands for the immortality of the poetic spirit: they are not Maisie and Herbert at all. This is unfortunate, for the author's estimate of his own work often reflects the fact that he is seldom a trained critic or logical analyst; to fully explain all his intuitions and intentions he would have to write another book.

Time, of course, adds to the disparity. When twelve years separate the novelist from his preface, as in this case, you need hardly wonder that the fogs have come up over his city. Mr. Fast himself says, in connection with this story of slum children on the Lower East Side: "When I picked it up . . . it was like reading the work of a stranger."

The story concerns five slum children: Shomake and Marie (Italian); Ollie and Thomas Edison (Irish); and Ishky (Jewish). It is Ishky who is the central character of the book, and even if you knew nothing about

Mr. Fast you could guess with his first sentence that "I, Ishky" is personal. It is Ishky who, perhaps too aptly, realizes his street is a world in miniature and points up the parallel between his shameful awe of the bully Ollie and the awe of a grown-up intellectual for force. It is Ishky who, through understanding, links the other children: Ollie, Shomake who wants to play the violin, the sophisticated Marie and the feeble-minded Thomas Edison. It is Ishky who watches them as they fight and play the length of a slum block which can best be compared to primeval jungle, or to that curiously primeval world inhabited by the children in Richard Hughes' *The Innocent Voyage*. It would be interesting to know whether Mr. Fast, the young factory worker of 1934, had read this then relatively unknown book (it is now available in a pocket edition). *The Children* has the same extraordinary, distended sense of time and place, which does more than anything else to mark out the peculiar children's world of *The Innocent Voyage*. Days last forever, because the percentage of routine is so small; a city block or a ship's deck is of immeasurable length; each brick on the street exists when you walk only three feet above it.

If *The Innocent Voyage* is a classic and Fast's first novel only good realism it is because Hughes has gone deeper, and has recorded the natural amorality of man. When Emily in *The Innocent Voyage* kills the helpless prisoner of the pirates, she is terrified, emotionally and physically, but not conscious of her guilt in its social sense: she acts in a social vacuum. Where the pirates consciously commit what they consciously know to be crimes, Emily kills instinctively. The frightening implication is that the instinct of murder is inborn.

Hughes creates his sense of horror on the social scale by introducing a set of *immoral* grown-ups (the pirates) who are terrified by the *amorality* of the children. Mr. Fast has largely failed to do this, and thus he must present contradictory children who kill instinctively and feel social guilt. The book is split therefore between scenes of fine description and amazing dialogue (in which the narrator, Ishky, appears in the third person), and slices of adult introspection like the following: "What is the use of trying to make me, Ishky, over in one day? I am Ishky, who never was much good for anything . . . ."

Each chapter begins and ends with philosophical meditations of this nature, in which the point of what has just dramatically occurred is driven in. Why? Partly the natural fear of the very young writer that he will not be understood. But below this, perhaps, there is a fear of the experience which cannot be pigeon-holed, a desire for pattern at the price of range. When Hughes dares make his murderers good, polite, well-brought-up children (who thus implicate every living man in their acts), Fast today must pretend that only the uneducated, only the underprivileged, are capable of sin, and cancels out his insights. So he can write a really extraordinary scene between Ishky and his mother:

She was standing in the hall, sobbing, when he came sheepishly and shamefully out of the cellar. Literally, he was black, his face was black, his clothes and his arms were black. He stood at the top of the cellar steps, looking at her.

"Oh, my heart, my love," she cried.

"I fell offana duh roof."

"God has preserved thee!"

"Gonna hit me?"

And then, having written this dialogue, which has meaning in connection with more than one human relationship, in more than one country, time, or place, he can narrow his meaning, today, and write in conclusion to his preface:

"If anything, twelve years have given us more and worse slums. If this small tale does anything to help replace them with decent housing, it will be well worth the printing." In this way the new Mr. Fast limits his book to a sociological case study. He disregards its further and wider intuitions, although they are still there for the reader. The housing officials may read the preface.

## A Joseph Story

CHARIOTEER. BY GERTRUDE EBERLE.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B.  
Erdman's Publishing Co., 1946. 295  
pp. \$2.50.

Reviewed by MORDECAI S. CHERTOFF

Mrs. Eberle believes that "a steadfast, positive faith accomplishes all things," and her two-ply rags-to-riches story is set forth as incontrovertible proof of her philosophy. Joseph and Raanah (of the title) rise from caravan bondboys to viceroy of Egypt and captain of Pharaoh's guard respectively, all by virtue of that faith. Mrs. Eberle seems to understand the Bible as a series of Horatio Alger stories, a source of Sunday School texts, and religion as a sort of working arrangement between God and man in which the Almighty rewards man in direct proportion to the latter's faith and his time spent in prayer.

For a Jew, it was not Joseph's personal success that was important. What was significant was that Joseph's temporary unhappiness finally made it possible for him to save a goodly portion of the then civilized world from starvation. The obvious moral for a Jew was that the ways of God are inscrutable, and man's limited vision disqualifies his value judgments.

The label on the dust cover notwithstanding, this is not a "novel." At best, it is a poor sermon, while any objective classification would put it just below the Bible Stories Comic Book, since the latter does tell the Biblical story, while Mrs. Eberle retains so little of the original plot as to make identification of the Biblical characters a matter of chance. Her talent is such that she destroys the charm of the Biblical story without at the same time contributing anything of her own.

## BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

DAVID T. BAZELON wrote "The Faith of Henry Wallace" in the April COMMENTARY. He has written for the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and various other periodicals.

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views in the *Nation*, *Partisan Review*, *Politics*, and other magazines.

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